ALIENS™

OMNIBUS

VOLUME 2

Many humans have died horribly at the claws of the Alien. The surface of Earth has been devastated to cleanse the nightmare beasts from our world. But the commercial value of this scourge has never been in doubt, especially when the special properties of the Alien Queen's royal jelly are discovered. Will Mankind once again risk its very survival as a species in order to sleep with the Alien?

Dark Horse Comics' critically acclaimed *Aliens* series set the bar for how the universe of a popular film could be expanded through graphic fiction. *Aliens Omnibus* Volume 2 collects more of these exciting tales in a value-priced omnibus, featuring over four hundred story pages in full color. Includes the complete story arcs of *Genocide*, *Harvest*, and the never-before-collected, epic-length *Colonial Marines*.

DARK HORSE BOOKS
DarkHorse.com

ISBN 978-1-59307-828-7
52499>
9 781593 078287

$24.99 US $27.50 CAN

FoxMovies.com

ALIENS™ OMNIBUS

2

DARK HORSE BOOKS®

ALIENS™

OMNIBUS

VOLUME 2

ALIENS™
OMNIBUS

ALIENS™

OMNIBUS

VOLUME 2

DARK HORSE BOOKS®

CONTENTS

GENOCIDE 5

HARVEST 105

COLONIAL MARINES 213

cover illustration **DAVE DORMAN**

publisher **MIKE RICHARDSON**
series editors **BARBARA KESEL and DAN THORSLAND**
collection editor **CHRIS WARNER**
designer **JOSHUA ELLIOTT**
art director **LIA RIBACCHI**

Special thanks to **DEBBIE OLSHAN** at Twentieth Century Fox Licensing.

ALIENS™ OMNIBUS Volume 2
Aliens™ & © 1986, 2007 by Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation. Illustrations and text © 1991, 1992, 1993, 1994, 2007 by Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation. All rights reserved. TM indicates a trademark of Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation. Dark Horse Books® and the Dark Horse logo are registered trademarks of Dark Horse Comics, Inc. All rights reserved. No portion of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted, in any form or by any means, without the express written permission of the copyright holders. Names, characters, places, and incidents featured in this publication either are the product of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously. Any resemblance to actual persons (living or dead), events, institutions, or locales, without satiric intent, is coincidental.

This volume collects material previously published as the Dark Horse graphic novels *Aliens: Genocide*; *Aliens: Harvest*; and issues one through ten of the Dark Horse comic-book series *Aliens: Colonial Marines*.

Dark Horse Books
A division of Dark Horse Comics, Inc.
10956 SE Main Street
Milwaukie, OR 97222

DarkHorse.com | FoxMovies.com

To find a comics shop in your area, call the Comic Shop Locator Service toll-free at 1-888-266-4226

executive vice president **NEIL HANKERSON** • chief financial officer **TOM WEDDLE** • vice president of publishing **RANDY STRADLEY** • vice president of business development **MICHAEL MARTENS** • vice president of business affairs **ANITA NELSON** • vice president of marketing **MICHA HERSHMAN** • vice president of product development **DAVID SCROGGY** • vice president of information technology **DALE LAFOUNTAIN** • senior director of print, design, and production **DARLENE VOGEL** • general counsel **KEN LIZZI** • editorial director **DAVEY ESTRADA** • senior managing editor **SCOTT ALLIE** • senior books editor **CHRIS WARNER** • executive editor **DIANA SCHUTZ** • director of print and development **CARY GRAZZINI** • art director **LIA RIBACCHI** • director of scheduling **CARA NIECE**

First edition: December 2007
ISBN 978-1-59307-828-7

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2
Printed at Midas Printing International, Ltd., Huizhou, China

GENOCIDE
SUYDAM © 91

story
MIKE RICHARDSON

script
JOHN ARCUDI

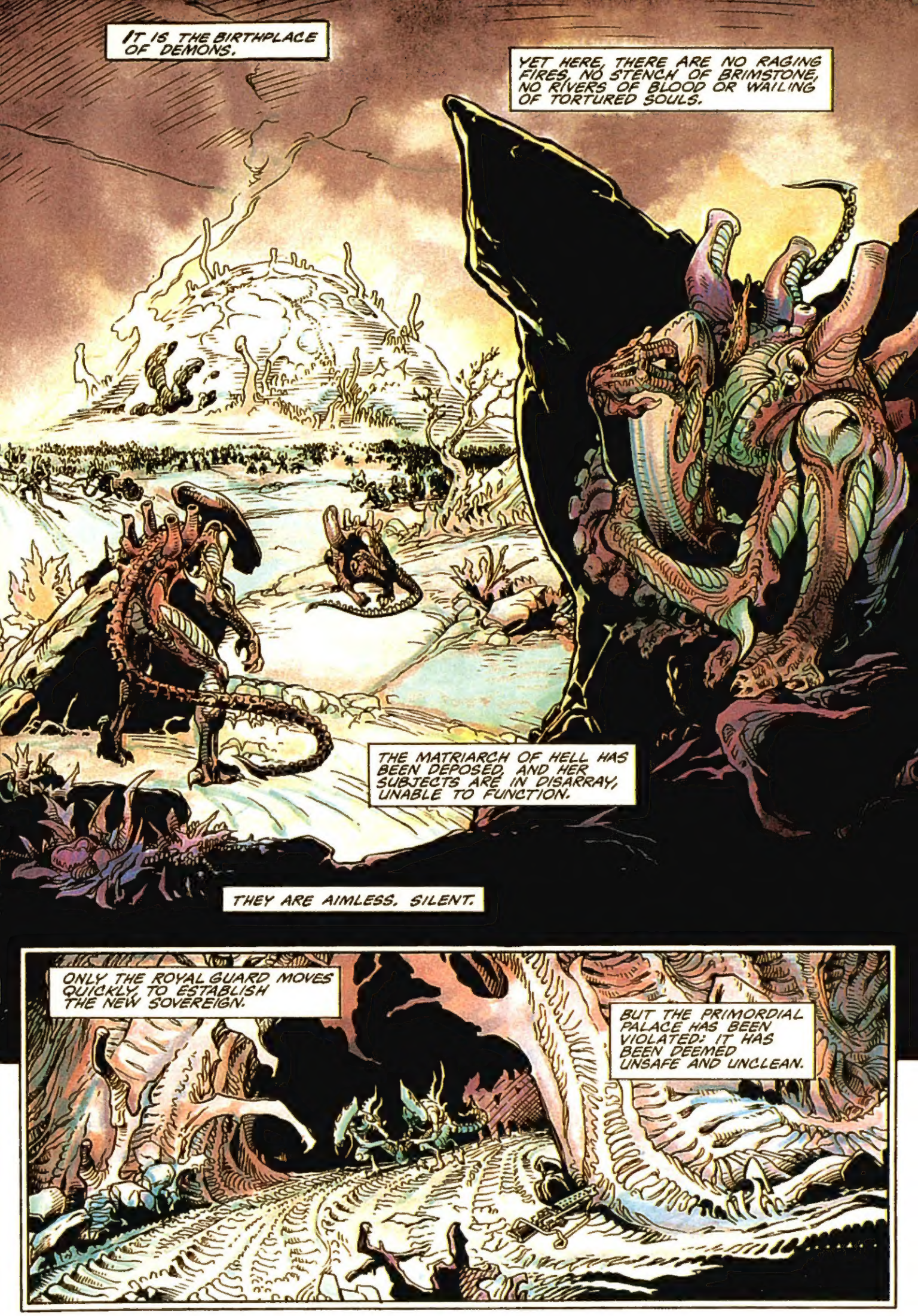
pencils
DAMON WILLIS

inks
KARL STORY

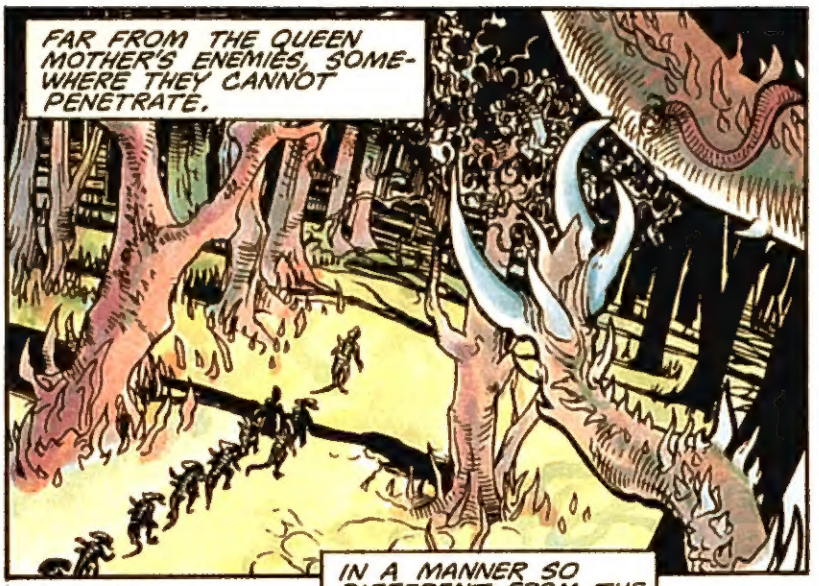
colors
ARTHUR SUYDAM

lettering
JIM MASSARA

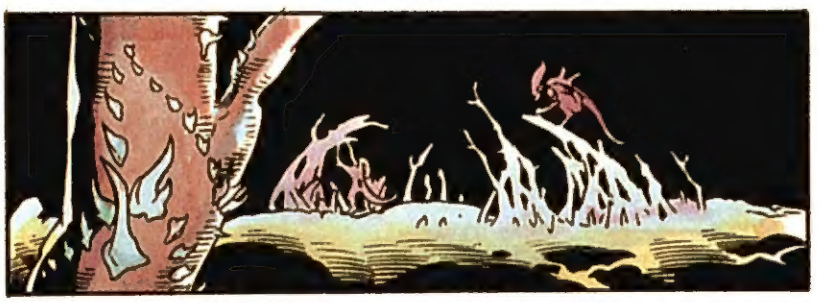
title illustration
ARTHUR SUYDAM

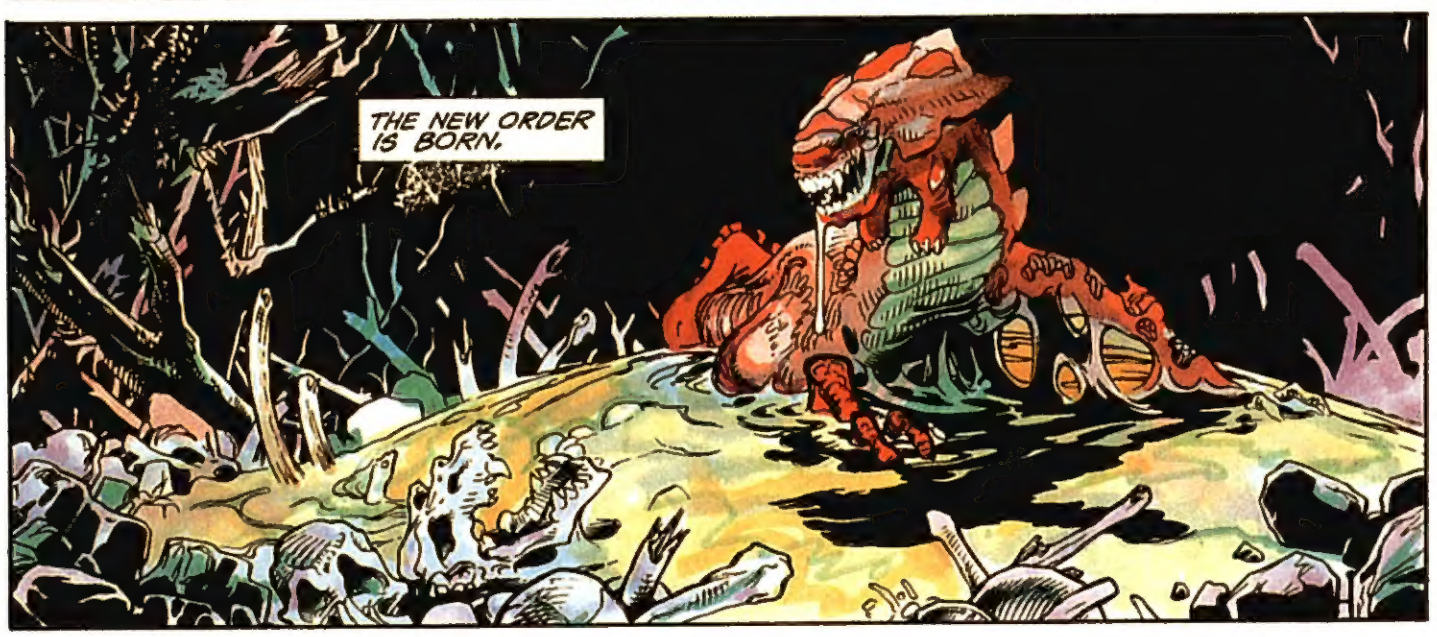

IT IS THE BIRTHPLACE OF DEMONS.
YET HERE, THERE ARE NO RAGING FIRES, NO STENCH OF BRIMSTONE, NO RIVERS OF BLOOD OR WAILING OF TORTURED SOULS.
THE MATRIARCH OF HELL HAS BEEN DEPOSED, AND HER SUBJECTS ARE IN DISARRAY, UNABLE TO FUNCTION.
THEY ARE AIMLESS. SILENT.
ONLY THE ROYAL GUARD MOVES QUICKLY, TO ESTABLISH THE NEW SOVEREIGN.
BUT THE PRIMORDIAL PALACE HAS BEEN VIOLATED: IT HAS BEEN DEEMED UNSAFE AND UNCLEAN.

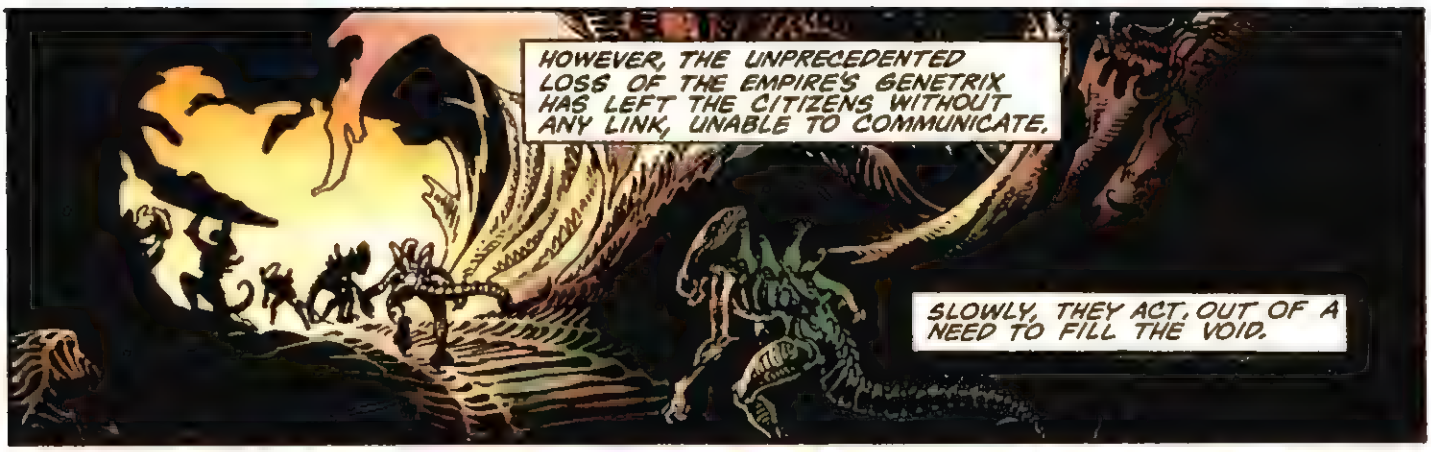
THE CRADLE OF THE SPECIES MUST BE RELOCATED.

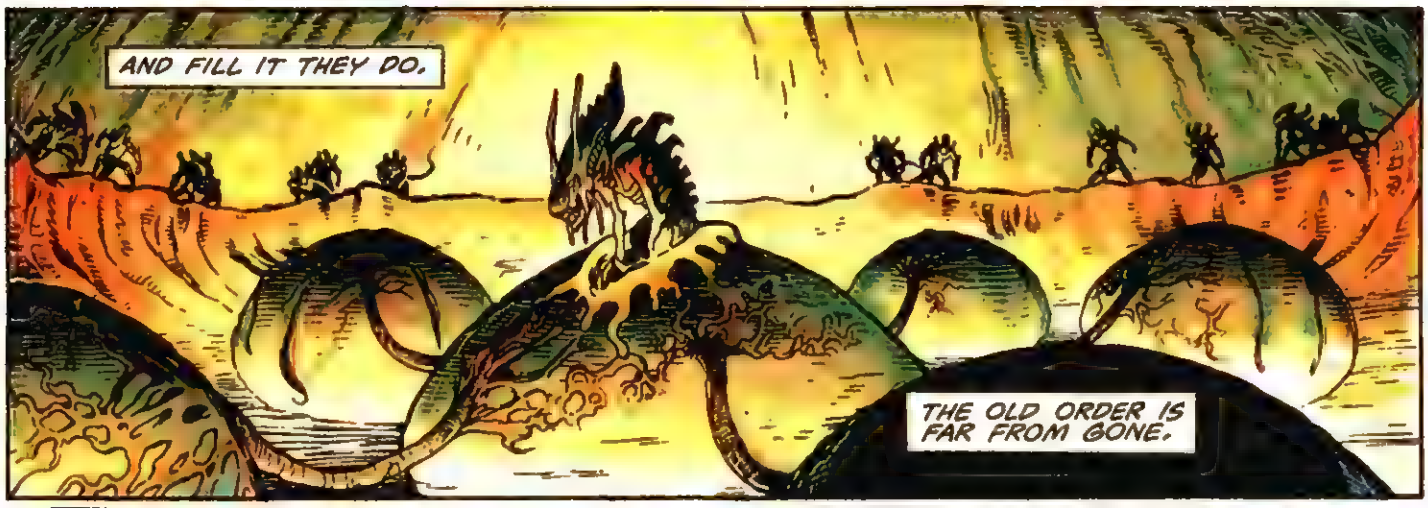

FAR FROM THE QUEEN MOTHER'S ENEMIES, SOMEWHERE THEY CANNOT PENETRATE.

IN A MANNER SO DIFFERENT FROM THE TRADITIONAL WAYS--




THE NEW ORDER IS BORN.

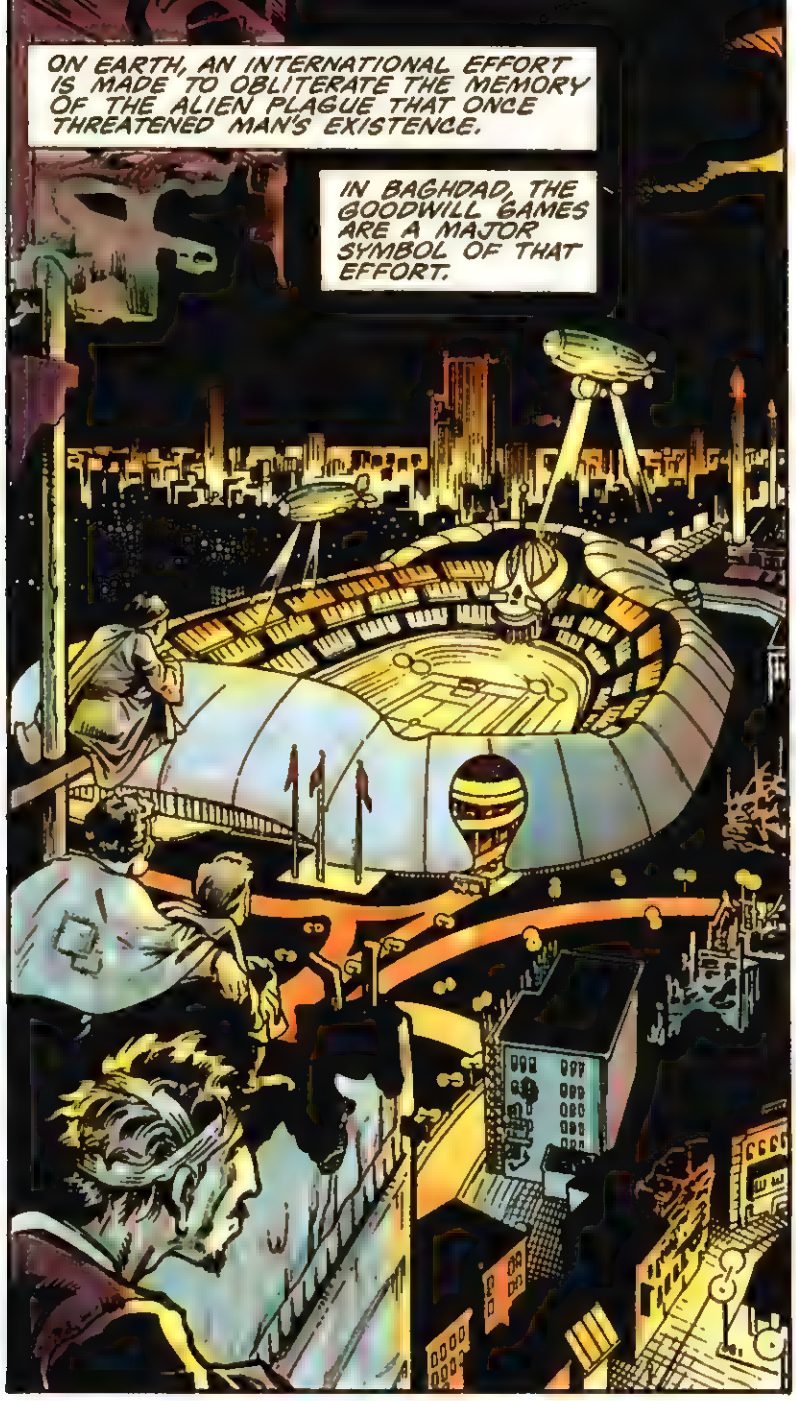

HOWEVER, THE UNPRECEDENTED LOSS OF THE EMPIRE'S GENETRIX HAS LEFT THE CITIZENS WITHOUT ANY LINK, UNABLE TO COMMUNICATE.
SLOWLY, THEY ACT, OUT OF A NEED TO FILL THE VOID.

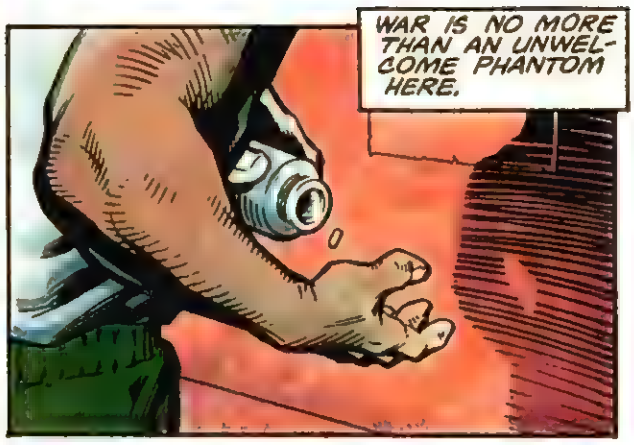

AND FILL IT THEY DO.
THE OLD ORDER IS FAR FROM GONE.

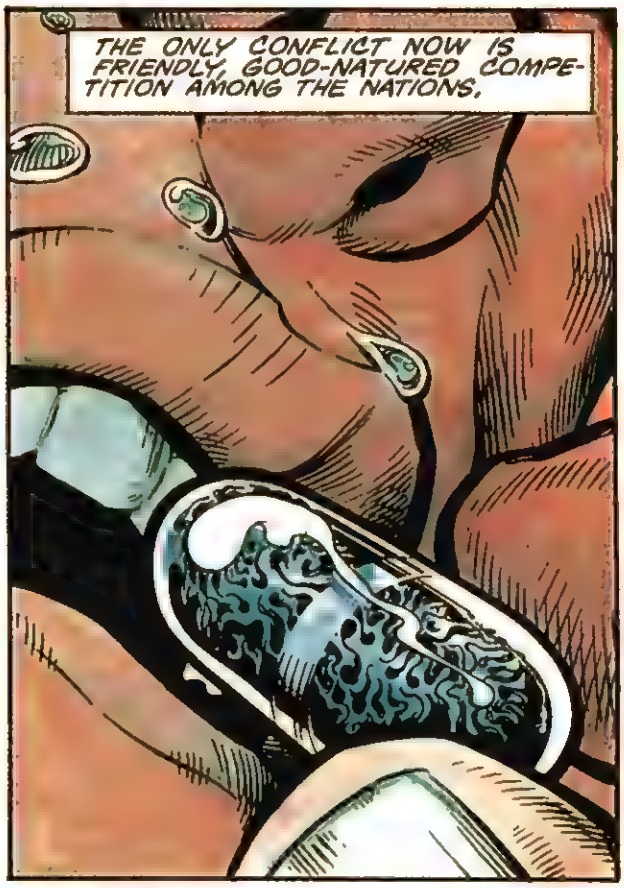
THE MISTRESS OF ONE KINGDOM CALLS OUT TO HER NATION.

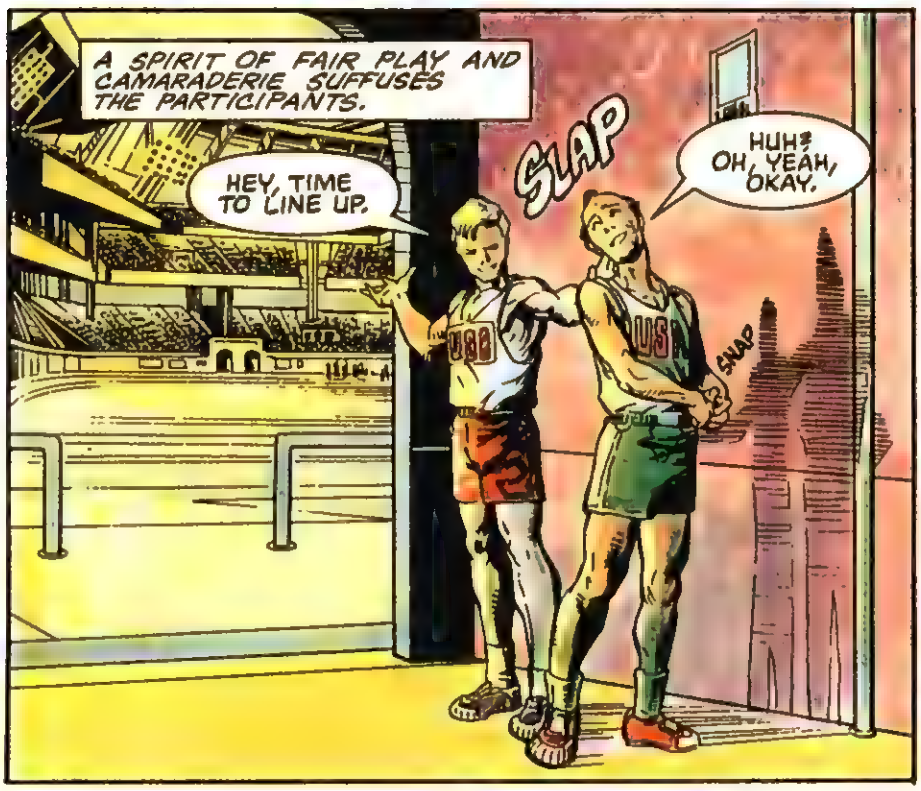
THE MISTRESS OF ANOTHER SENDS OUT HER OWN COMMAND.

THE RESULT IS A CRY FOR—
"...GENOCIDE!"


ON EARTH, AN INTERNATIONAL EFFORT IS MADE TO OBLITERATE THE MEMORY OF THE ALIEN PLAGUE THAT ONCE THREATENED MAN'S EXISTENCE.
IN BAGHDAD, THE GOODWILL GAMES ARE A MAJOR SYMBOL OF THAT EFFORT.

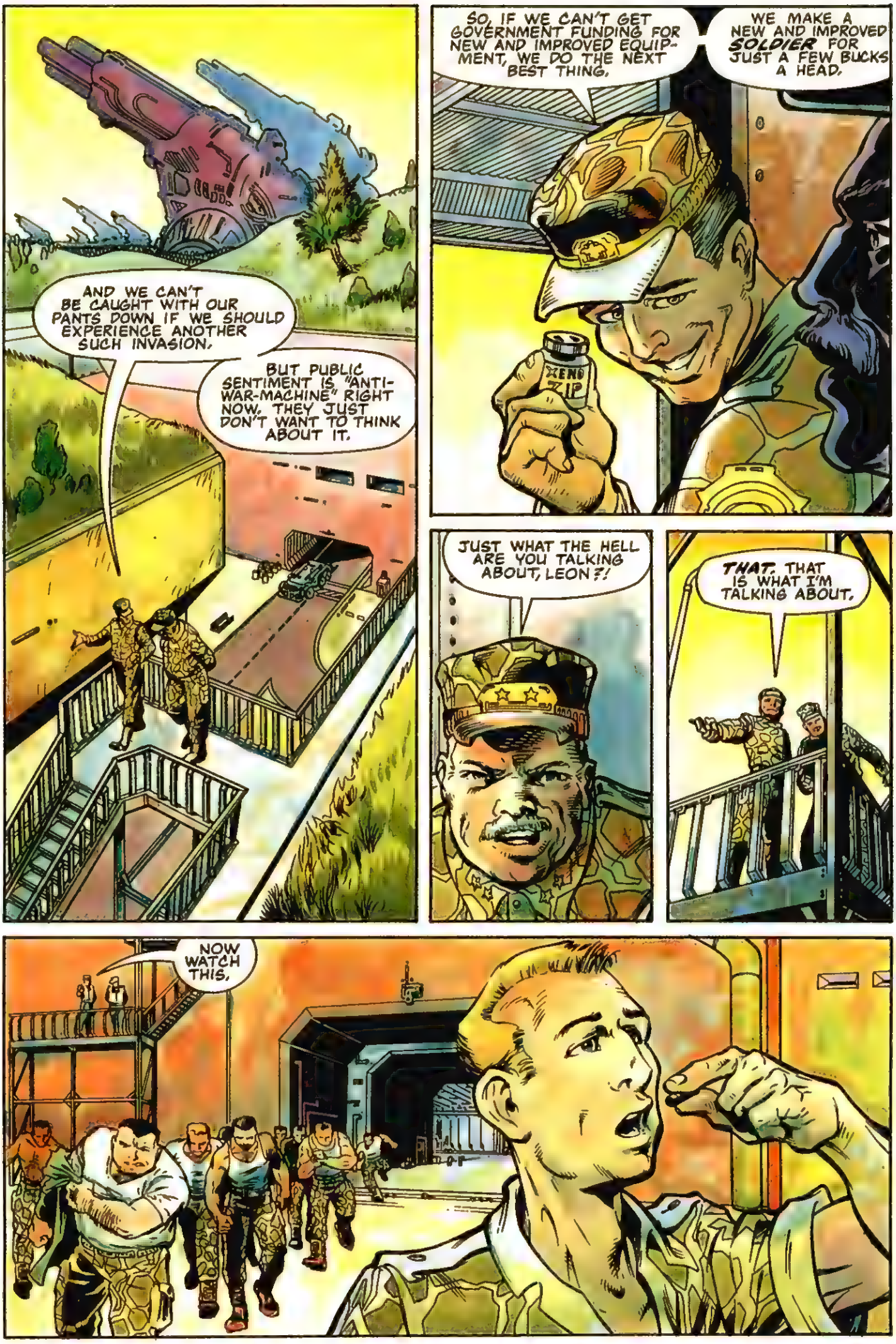

WAR IS NO MORE THAN AN UNWELCOME PHANTOM HERE.


THE ONLY CONFLICT NOW IS FRIENDLY, GOOD-NATURED COMPETITION AMONG THE NATIONS.


A SPIRIT OF FAIR PLAY AND CAMARADERIE SUFFUSES THE PARTICIPANTS.
HEY, TIME TO LINE UP.
SLAP
HUH? OH, YEAH, OKAY.
USA
US
SNAP

BANG!

UNBELIEVABLE!!!
ORIANDER IS LITERALLY BURNING UP THE TRACK!
ORIANDER EASILY WINS THE 100-METER DA--
HOLD ON! ORIANDER ISN'T SLOWING DOWN. HE'S ACTUALLY PICKING UP SPEED.
I-I THINK HE'S GOING TO--
CRASH!
SAY, DOC, IS HE... Y'KNOW?
WHAT DO YOU THINK!?
A YOUNG LIFE, SNUFFED OUT--
FOR SOME STUPID RACE.
OH, BUT, DOC-- THAT WAS A NEW WORLD RECORD.
I'LL BE SURE TO TELL THAT TO HIS MOTHER.
XENO-Z


AND WE CAN'T BE CAUGHT WITH OUR PANTS DOWN IF WE SHOULD EXPERIENCE ANOTHER SUCH INVASION.
BUT PUBLIC SENTIMENT IS "ANTI-WAR-MACHINE" RIGHT NOW. THEY JUST DON'T WANT TO THINK ABOUT IT.
SO, IF WE CAN'T GET GOVERNMENT FUNDING FOR NEW AND IMPROVED EQUIPMENT, WE DO THE NEXT BEST THING.
WE MAKE A NEW AND IMPROVED SOLDIER FOR JUST A FEW BUCKS A HEAD.
XENO ZIP
JUST WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT, LEON?!
THAT. THAT IS WHAT I'M TALKING ABOUT.
NOW WATCH THIS.

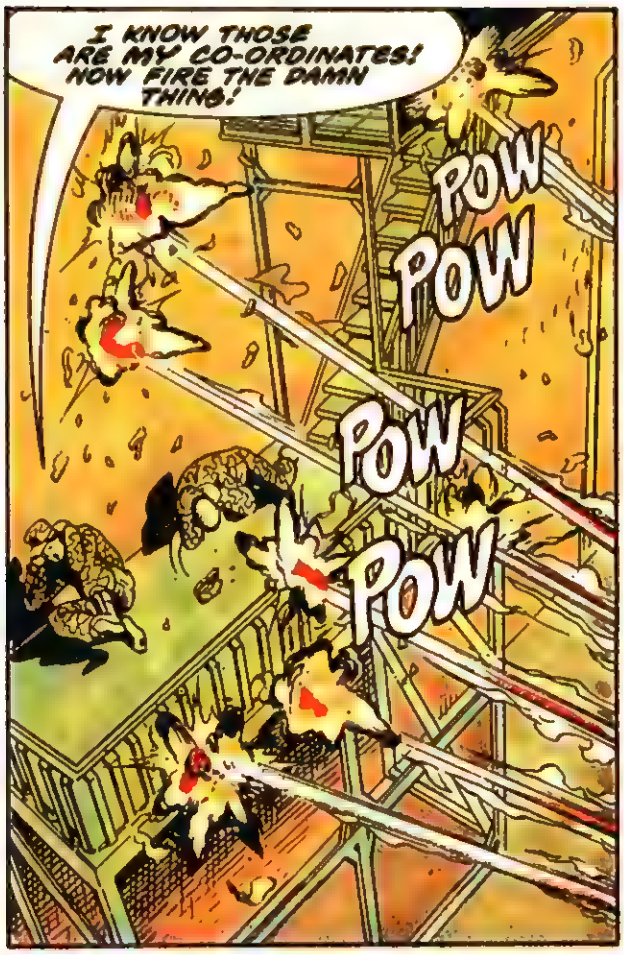
HUHN!
OOOF!

YAAAA

HE'S OUT OF CONTROL, COLONEL.
WE NEED AN ARMED SOLDIER OUT HERE NOW!!

COLONAAAAA!!!!!!

DAMMIT, JOHN, JUST FLICK IT TO THE LEFT!
I'M TELLING YOU, IT'S STUCK!
JEEZ-US, JOHN, WATCH OUT!
BUDDABUDDA
KRAK
YAAAEEEEEE!
BUDDAB!


I KNOW THOSE ARE MY CO-ORDINATES! NOW FIRE THE DAMN THING!
POW
POW
POW
POW

OH, MOTHER OF...

WHOOO

HOW MUCH DID YOU SAY THIS STUFF COST?

MANHATTAN, LAND OF THE FREE ENTERPRISE AND HOME OF A BRAVE NEW BREED OF BUSINESSMAN.

IN AN EFFORT TO ENCOURAGE THE RE-BUILDING OF AMERICA, GOVERNMENT INCENTIVES HAVE CREATED OPTIMAL CONDITIONS FOR CREATIVE MARKET VENTURES.

THERE IS A LOT OF MONEY TO BE MADE FROM THE MISFORTUNES OF A NATION IN RUIN--

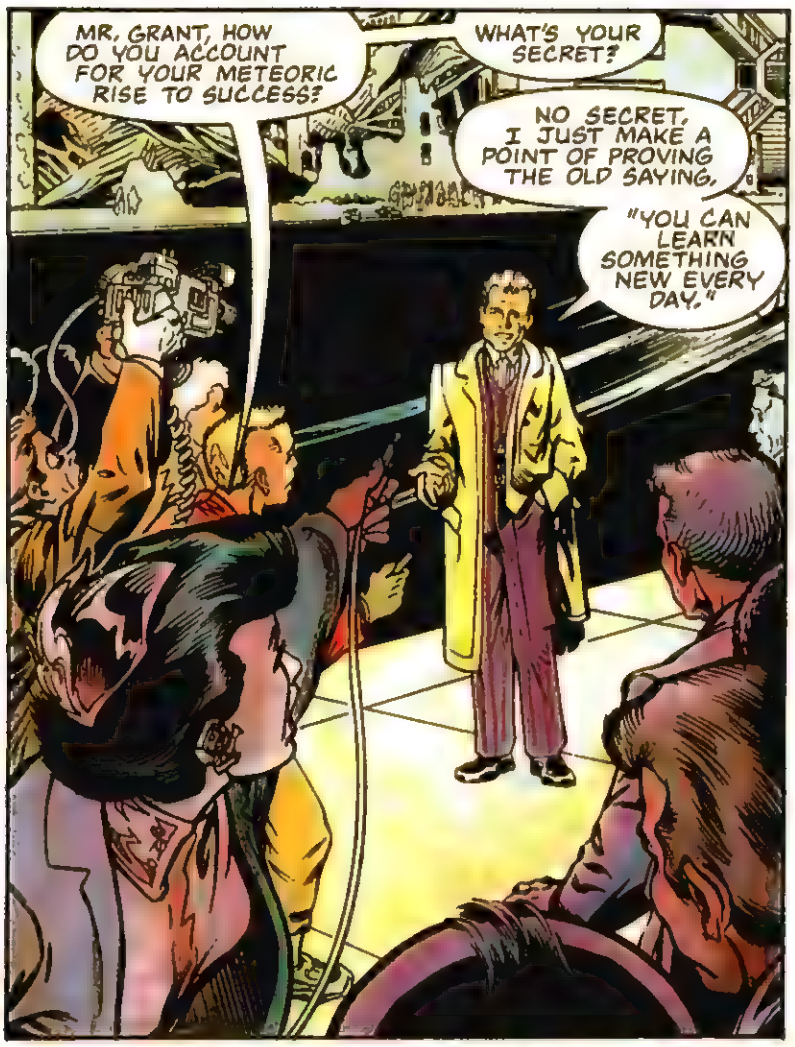
--IF ONE HAS THE STOMACH FOR IT.

DAMMIT, HENRY, DON'T PUT THE CAMERA ON ME, PUT IT ON *HIM.*

HUH? ON WHO?

HERE, DOLL, GO BUY YOUR-SELF SOMETHING NICE.

"DANIEL GRANT, STUPID!"

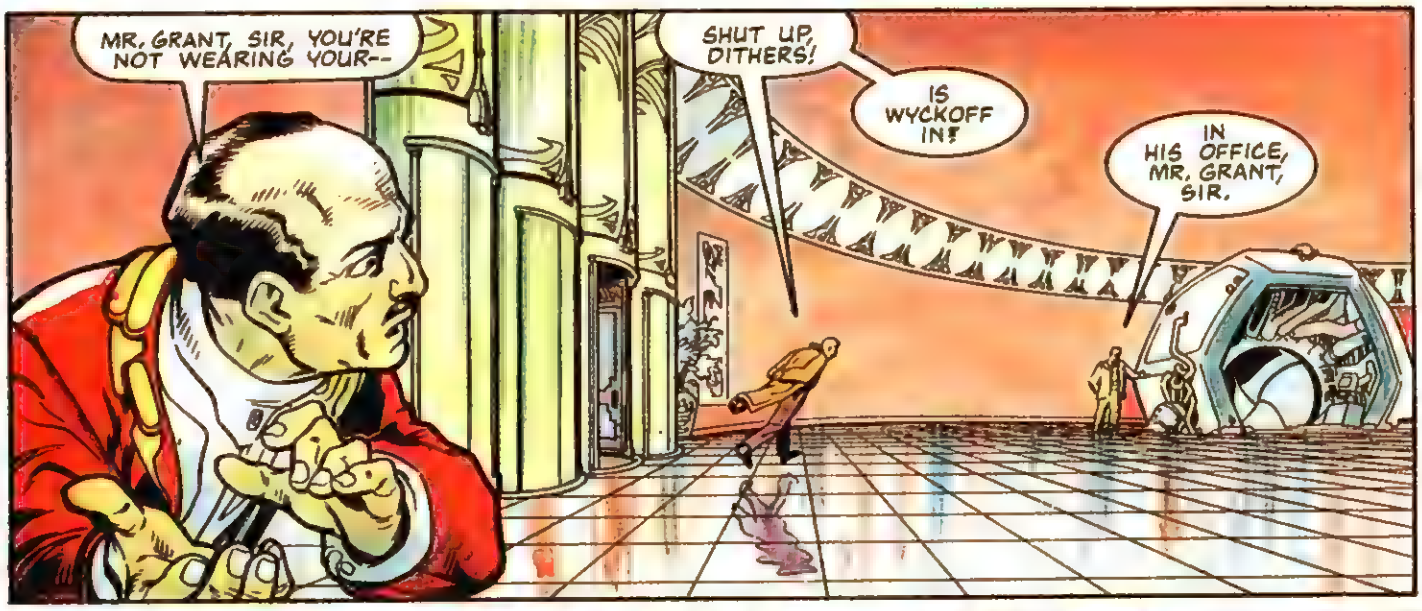

MR. GRANT, HOW DO YOU ACCOUNT FOR YOUR METEORIC RISE TO SUCCESS?
WHAT'S YOUR SECRET?
NO SECRET. I JUST MAKE A POINT OF PROVING THE OLD SAYING,
"YOU CAN LEARN SOMETHING NEW EVERY DAY."

MR. GRANT, WHAT LED TO THE RECENT SPLIT BETWEEN YOU AND YOUR LAST WIFE?
NO COMMENT.
CAN YOU CONFIRM RUMORS THAT YOU ARE PLANNING TO ENTER POLITICS?
OF COURSE NOT.
WHO WAS THAT YOUNG LADY YOU DROVE UP WITH?
A FRIEND.
IS IT TRUE THAT YOUR FINANCIAL EMPIRE IS IN TROUBLE?
WHERE DID YOU HEAR THAT ONE?

MR. GRANT, COULD YOU COMMENT ON THE ALLEGED LETHAL SIDE EFFECTS OF YOUR NEW WONDER DRUG?

I'M UNAWARE OF SUCH REPORTS, BUT I HAVE FULL CONFIDENCE IN ALL MY EMPLOYEES.
ESPECIALLY THOSE HARD-WORKING MEN AT NEO-PHARM.

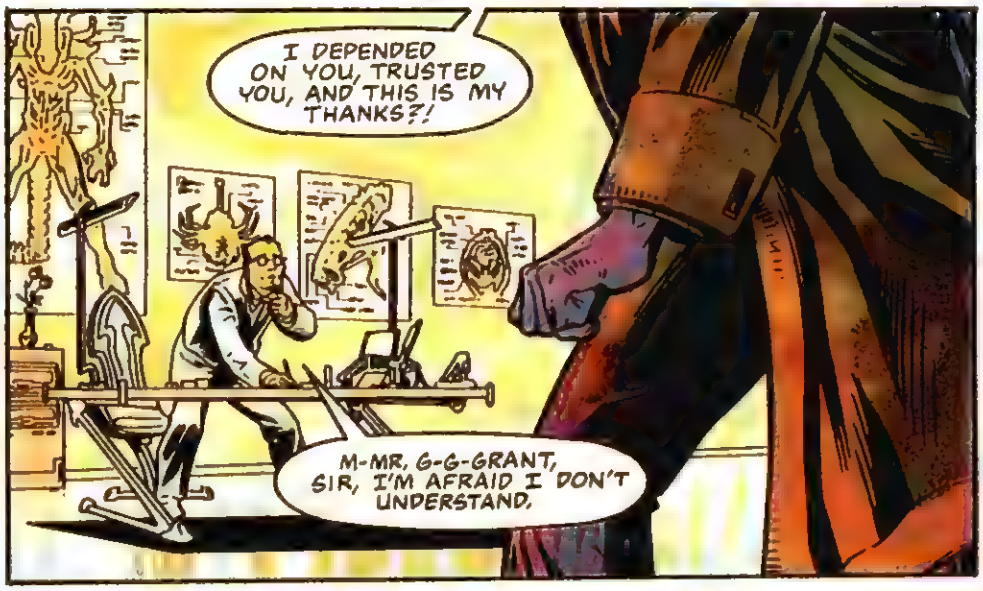
MR. GRANT
COULD YOU ANSWER ONE MORE
WILL YOU
WHY DID --


MR. GRANT, SIR, YOU'RE NOT WEARING YOUR--
SHUT UP, DITHERS!
IS WYCKOFF IN?
IN HIS OFFICE, MR. GRANT, SIR.

GOOD MORNING, MR. GRANT, SIR.
GREAT TO SEE YOU, MR. GRANT, SIR.
MMMMHH!

EVER WONDER IF THESE SUITS COULD PROTECT US AGAINST HIS BLOOD?

WHAM
WYCKOFF, YOU SUBVERSIVE MAGGOT!
DR. PATRICK
WYCKOFF

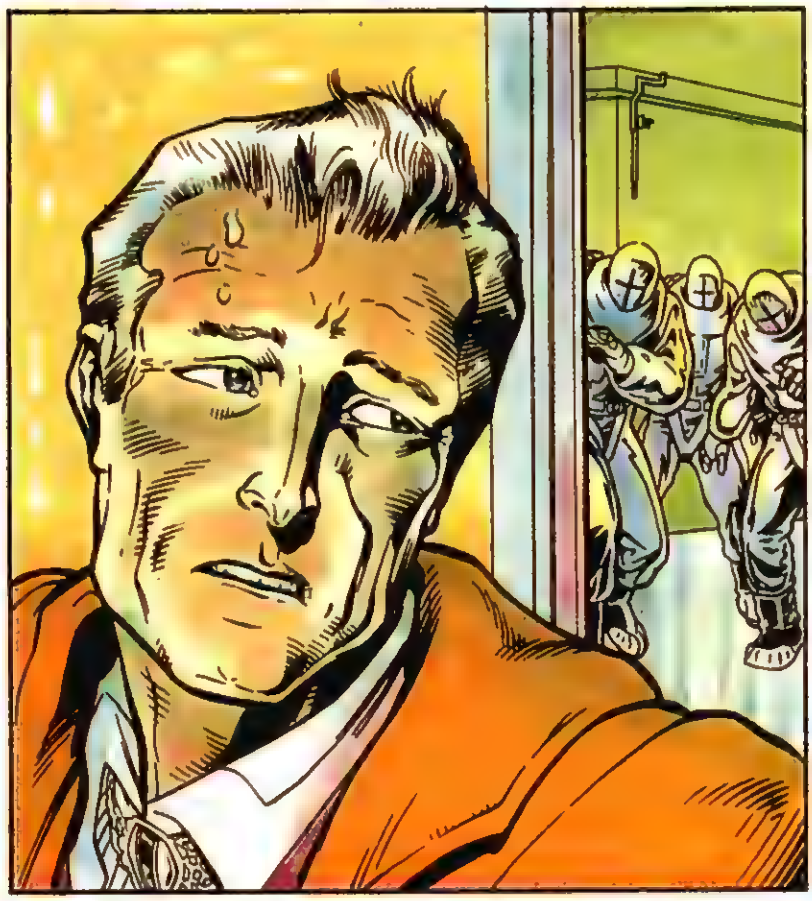

I DEPENDED ON YOU, TRUSTED YOU, AND THIS IS MY THANKS?!
M-MR. G-G-GRANT, SIR, I'M AFRAID I DON'T UNDERSTAND.

THEN LET ME BE MORE DIRECT!!!

DON'T YOU REALIZE THAT IF NEO-PHARM GOES DOWN, EVERYTHING FALLS WITH IT?
I'VE INVESTED EVERY LAST PENNY INTO THIS COMPANY. THE PROPERTY, THE HOTELS, THE SHUTTLE--EVEN MY CASINO!

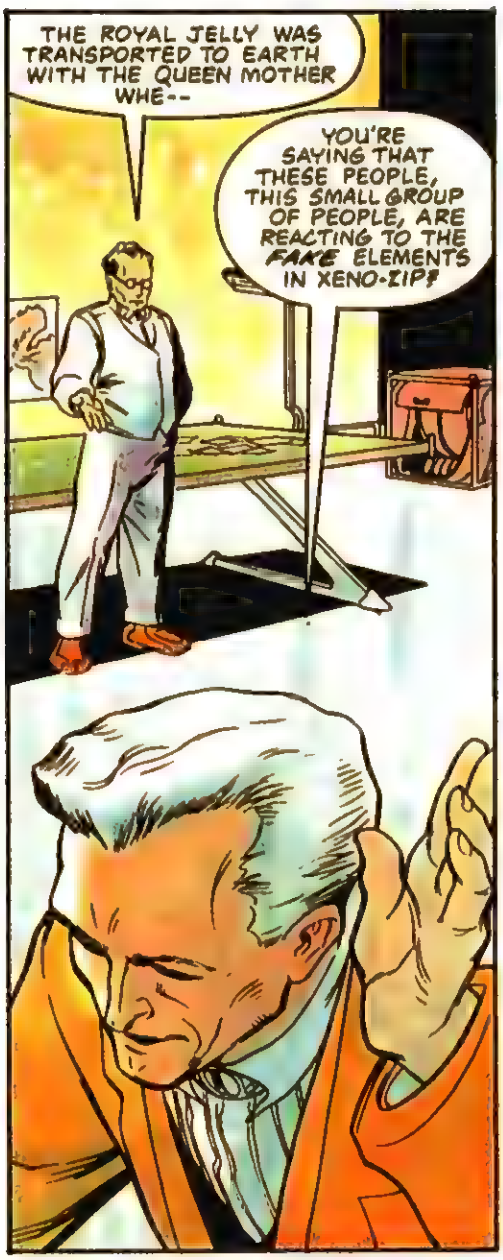
IS THAT WHAT YOU WANT TO DO? ARE YOU TRYING TO DESTROY ME, BECAUSE THAT'S WHAT YOU'RE DOING.
YOU'RE KILLING ME, WYCKOFF, YOU-ARE-KILLING-ME!
MR. G-G-RANT, P-P-LEASE ...

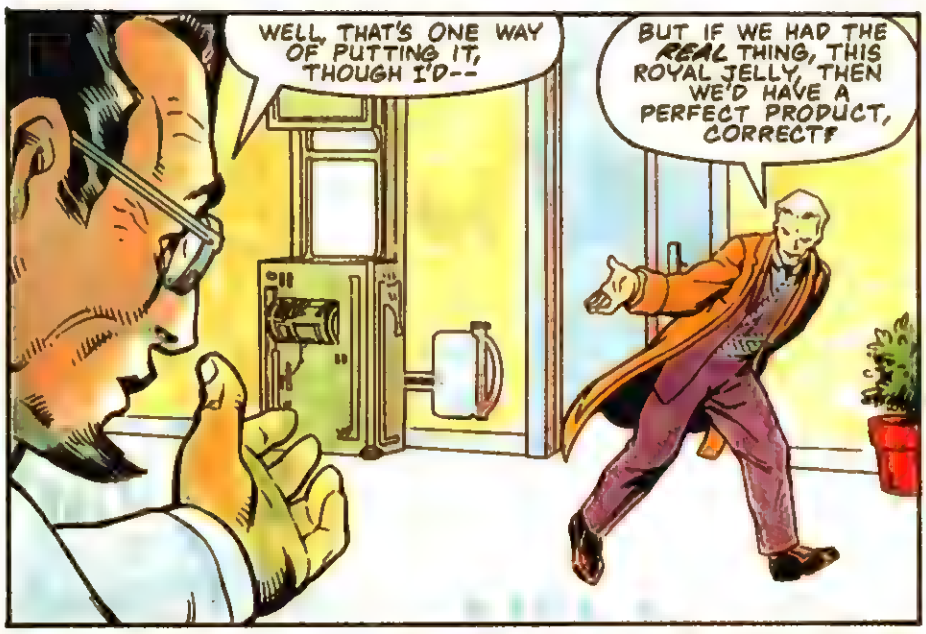
WHY, WYCKOFF? WHY ME?
TELL ME, WHAT HAVE I EVER DONE TO YOU?



OH, STOP OVERREACTING, BOB. GET UP OFF YOUR KNEES.
HERE, LET ME HELP YOU.

BOB, I'VE BEEN GETTING REPORTS THAT OUR XENO-ZIP IS NOT QUITE SO MARVELOUS AS WE FIRST THOUGHT.
IN FACT, IT SEEMS THAT A NUMBER OF OUR CUSTOMERS GET A BIT...UH, CARRIED AWAY.
WHAT CAN YOU TELL ME ABOUT THIS?
WELL, MR. GRANT, SIR, IT APPEARS THAT A SMALL PERCENTAGE OF THE POPULATION IS OVERLY SENSITIVE TO XENO-ZIP.
IT HAS TO DO WITH THE CHEMICAL CONFIGURATIONS OF THE NEW SYNTHETIC ELEMENTS.
C'MON, BOB, HOW ABOUT THAT IN ENGLISH, EH?
WELL, SIR, IT APPEARS THAT OUR FORMULA FOR XENO-ZIP IS IMPERFECT.
THERE WERE CERTAIN ELEMENTS IN THE ORIGINAL FORMULA WHICH CAN'T BE FOUND HERE ON EARTH.
WE THOUGHT WE HAD SUITABLY MIMICKED THESE ELEMENTS, BUT THE FACT IS, WE DIDN'T.
WE CAN'T.
AHH, RIGHT, YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT THAT ALIEN GOO, WHAT WAS IT CALLED, REGAL JAM?
ROYAL JELLY, SIR.


THE ROYAL JELLY WAS TRANSPORTED TO EARTH WITH THE QUEEN MOTHER WHE--
YOU'RE SAYING THAT THESE PEOPLE, THIS SMALL GROUP OF PEOPLE, ARE REACTING TO THE FAKE ELEMENTS IN XENO-ZIP?

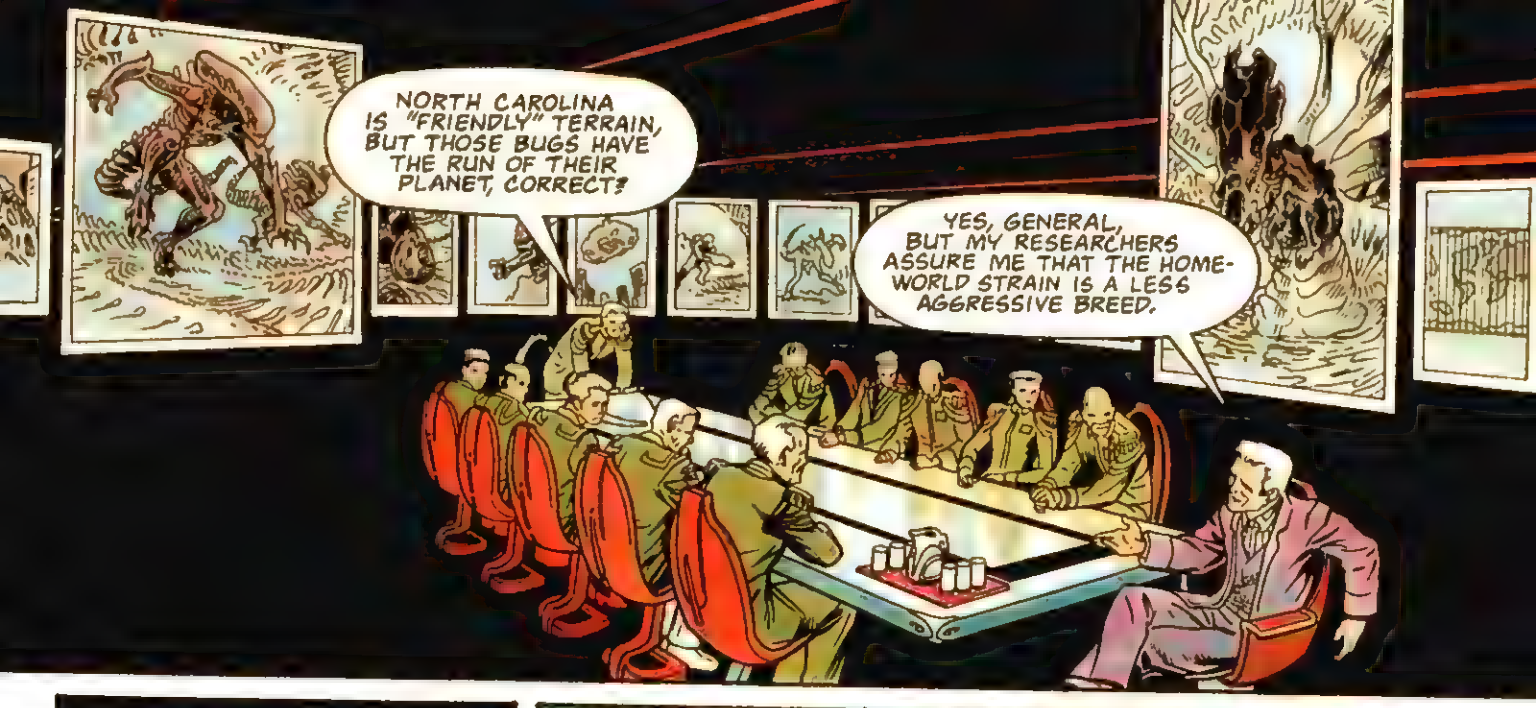

WELL, THAT'S ONE WAY OF PUTTING IT, THOUGH I'D--
BUT IF WE HAD THE REAL THING, THIS ROYAL JELLY, THEN WE'D HAVE A PERFECT PRODUCT, CORRECT?

ER, UH, YES, WE THINK SO.
BUT THERE IS ONLY ONE KNOWN SOURCE OF THE JELLY, SIR.
WELL THEN, WE'RE JUST GOING TO HAVE TO GO THERE AND GET IT, AREN'T WE?

GENTLEMEN, WE'VE ALL GOT WORK TO DO, SO HOP TO IT.
OF COURSE, MR. GRANT.
YESSIR.
RIGHT AWAY, SIR.
ABSOLUTELY, SIR.

ANYTHING YOU SAY, MR. GRANT --SIR.

OH GAWD, THE PAIN, THE PAAA!!!!--
SURE, THIS LOOKS EASY--
BUT WHAT YOU'RE ASKING IS A WHOLE DIFFERENT KETTLE OF FISH.


NORTH CAROLINA IS "FRIENDLY" TERRAIN, BUT THOSE BUGS HAVE THE RUN OF THEIR PLANET, CORRECT?
YES, GENERAL, BUT MY RESEARCHERS ASSURE ME THAT THE HOME-WORLD STRAIN IS A LESS AGGRESSIVE BREED.

IN THEIR OWN NATURAL ENVIRONMENT, WHERE THEY EVOLVED, THERE IS A DELICATELY BALANCED ECOSYSTEM.
THEY HAVE PREDATORS THERE TO KEEP THEM IN CHECK.
REMOVING THEM FROM THAT WORLD, ELIMINATING THE PREDA-TORS, HAS TURNED THEM INTO WHAT THEY ARE TODAY.

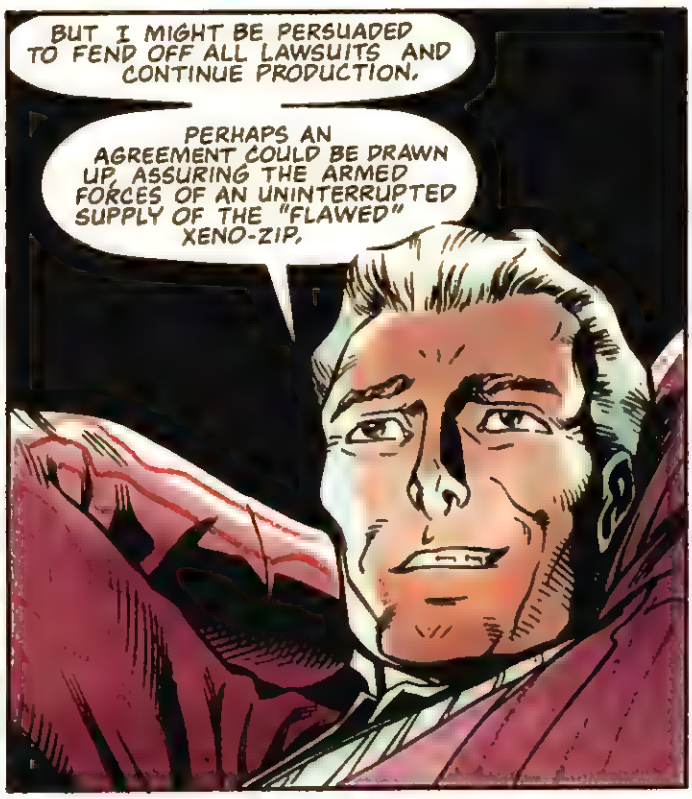
THAT ALL SOUNDS VERY GOOD, BUT LET'S NOT FORGET THE QUEEN MOTHER CAME FROM THE HOMEWORLD.
I'VE ONLY HEARD THE STORIES, BUT THEY'RE ENOUGH TO MAKE ME RATHER WARY OF THIS SORT OF MISSION.

WELL, JUST LIKE ANY OTHER FEMALE, I'M SURE SHE CAN BE A PERFECT BITCH--

--BUT THE BEAUTY OF IT IS, WE CAN JUST SHOOT HER.

NOW LET'S CUT OUT THE CRAP, AND GET DOWN TO BUSINESS.
GRANT, WHY THE HELL SHOULD WE HELP YOU? FACT IS, WE KINDA LIKE THIS XENO-ZIP STUFF THE WAY IT IS.

WELL, YOU'RE ALONE THERE, SIR. BERSERKERS ARE NOT MUCH USE IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR.
LAWSUITS WILL FORCE ME TO STOP MAKING XENO-ZIP ALTOGETHER, SOMETHING YOU'D RATHER NOT SEE, CORRECT?


BUT I MIGHT BE PERSUADED TO FEND OFF ALL LAWSUITS AND CONTINUE PRODUCTION.
PERHAPS AN AGREEMENT COULD BE DRAWN UP, ASSURING THE ARMED FORCES OF AN UNINTERRUPTED SUPPLY OF THE "FLAWED" XENO-ZIP.

UNLESS, OF COURSE, OFFICER SHRINKING VIOLET DISAPPROVES.

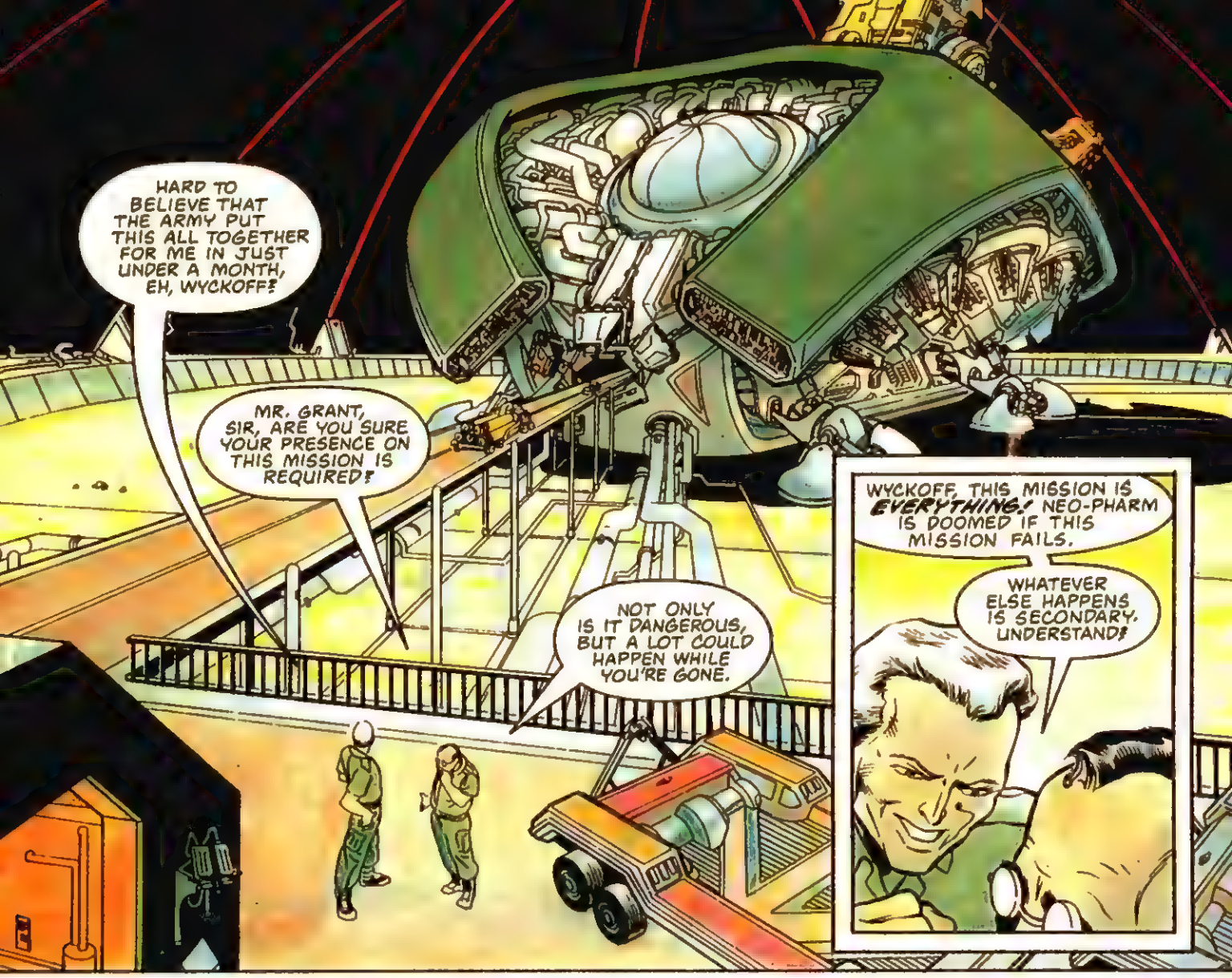
WELL, BURTON-- WHAT DO YOU THINK?

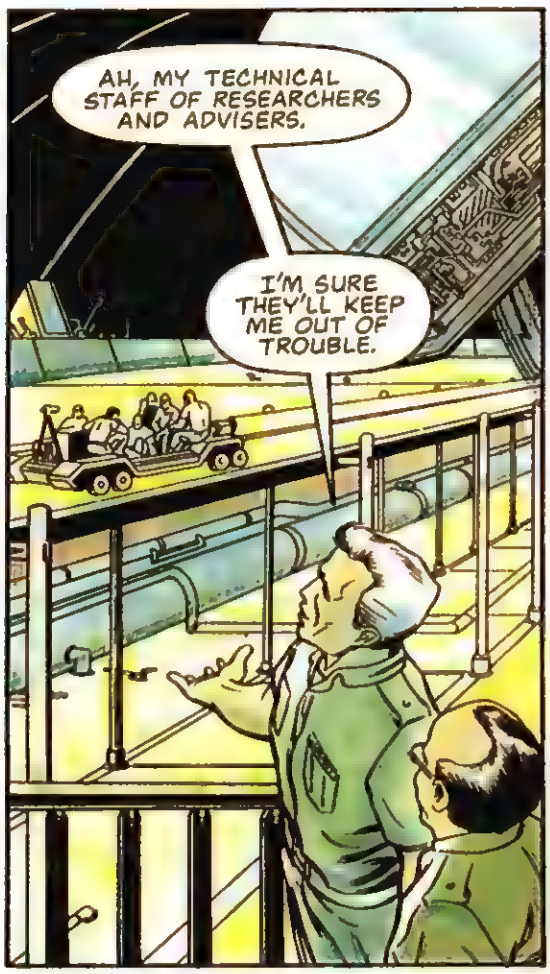
NILES, I'M ONLY PRESIDING HERE. THIS IS YOUR SHOW.
I'M WILLING TO GIVE YOU THE OKAY ON A STAFFED DEEP-SPACE TACTICAL VESSEL.

WELL, GRANT, IT LOOKS LIKE WE CAN WORK SOMETHING OUT.
GLAD TO HEAR IT, GENERAL, GLAD TO HEAR IT.
LEAVE THE EGGHEAD WORK TO ME AND MY STAFF. YOU JUST PROVIDE THE GUNS, THE GRUNTS AND THE GONDOLA.

YOU WILL, OF COURSE, GIVE ME THE BEST MEN FOR THE JOB.
YOUR COMMANDING OFFICER WILL BE MAJOR ALEX LEE, A KEY PLAYER IN THE ALIEN MOP-UP AND THE YOUNGEST HOLDER OF THE CONGRESSIONAL MEDAL OF HONOR.

WELL, WELL, SOUNDS LIKE I'LL BE IN GOOD HANDS.
CAN'T WAIT TO MEET THE MAN.

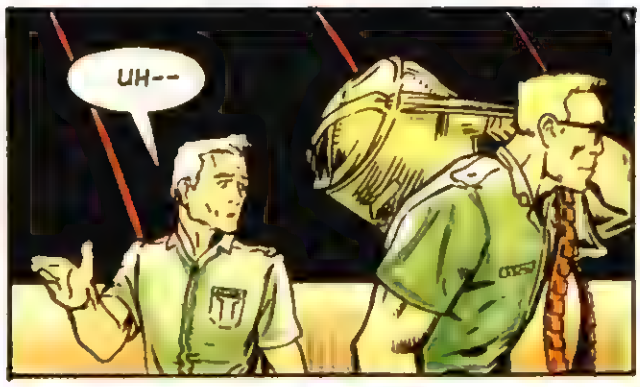

HARD TO BELIEVE THAT THE ARMY PUT THIS ALL TOGETHER FOR ME IN JUST UNDER A MONTH, EH, WYCKOFF?
MR. GRANT, SIR, ARE YOU SURE YOUR PRESENCE ON THIS MISSION IS REQUIRED?
NOT ONLY IS IT DANGEROUS, BUT A LOT COULD HAPPEN WHILE YOU'RE GONE.
WYCKOFF, THIS MISSION IS EVERYTHING! NEO-PHARM IS DOOMED IF THIS MISSION FAILS.
WHATEVER ELSE HAPPENS IS SECONDARY. UNDERSTAND?


AH, MY TECHNICAL STAFF OF RESEARCHERS AND ADVISERS.
I'M SURE THEY'LL KEEP ME OUT OF TROUBLE.

"ONLY, WHO THE HELL IS THAT GUY?"
"THAT'S BEGALLI, SIR. HE JUMPED SHIP FROM MEDTECH A FEW MONTHS BACK, BUT HIS ALIEN KNOWLEDGE IS UNSURPASSED. I'M SURE HE'LL BE OF GREAT ASSISTANCE."

I'LL HAVE TO TAKE YOUR-- GOOD LORD, WYCKOFF, WOULD YOU LOOK AT THAT!
NOW THAT'S A MAN!

WELL, THIS IS AN HONOR, MAJOR LEE.
GLAD TO HAVE YOU AND YOUR MEN ABOARD.
GRANT


UH--

AND IT'S A PLEASURE TO MEET YOU, MR. GRANT.
AGAIN.
UH, BUT, UHH--

I KNOW WE'VE GOT A LOT TO TALK ABOUT, MR. GRANT, BUT I HAVE TO BRIEF MY PEOPLE.
WE'LL HAVE PLENTY OF TIME TO CHAT ON BOARD, I'M SURE.
YES, UH --ABSOLUTELY ...RIGHT.

HMMM, WELL, IF SHE'S GOT THE CONGRESSIONAL MEDAL OF HONOR, I'M SURE SHE MUST BE AN EXCELLENT SOLDIER.
NICE ASS, TOO.

DANIEL?
MR. GRANT, SIR?
IT'S TIME TO WAKE UP, MR. GRANT.
WE'VE GOT A LOT TO DO.
SO HOP TO IT.

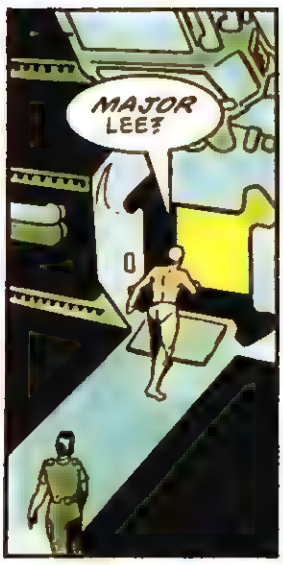
YAAAAAA!
HA HA HAH. I KNEW THAT WOULD GET YOU UP AND AROUND.

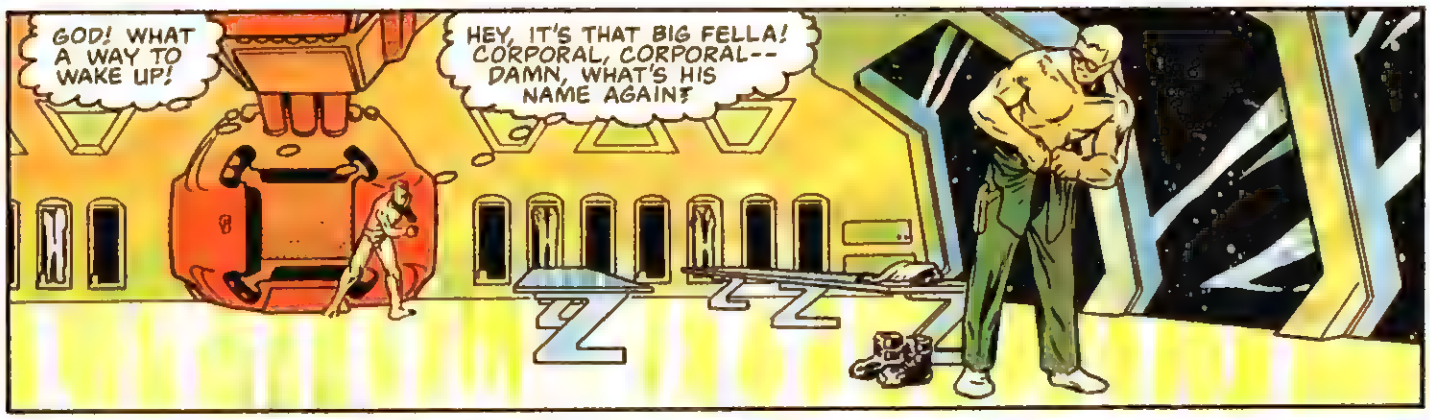
OHH, DON'T WORRY, MR. GRANT, IT'S JUST A TRAINING HOLOGRAM.
SEE?
SORRY, BUT YOUR MILITARY YOKS DON'T QUITE CUT IT WITH A CIVILIAN, *MISS* LEE.

THAT'S MAJOR LEE.

AND YEAH, YOU'RE A CIVILIAN, BUT YOU'RE ALSO THE ONE WHO WANTED TO PLAY "BIG WHITE HUNTER," SO GET USED TO THE ATMOSPHERE.

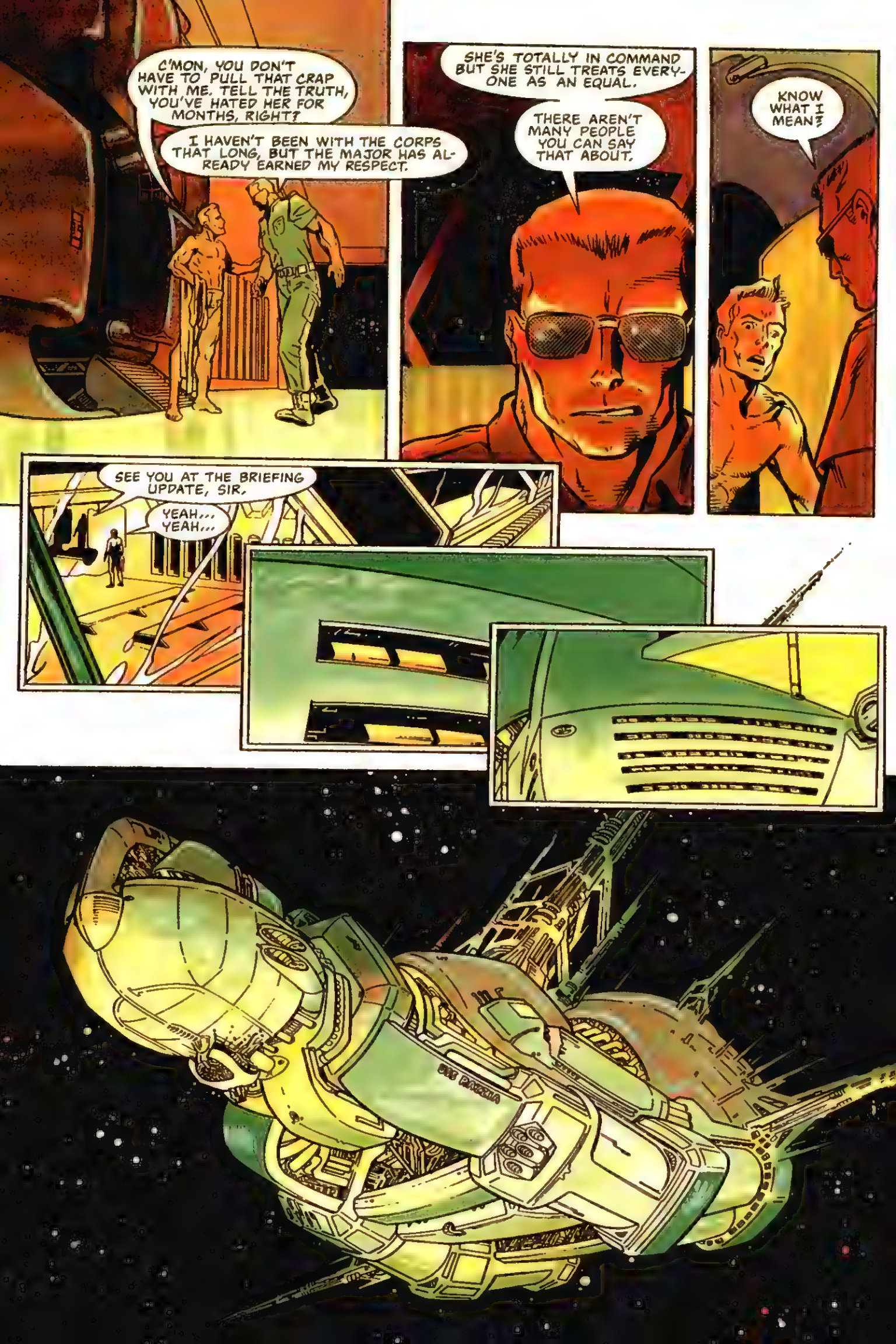
DO YOU SUPPOSE WE COULD DISCUSS THIS AFTER I GET DRESSED--

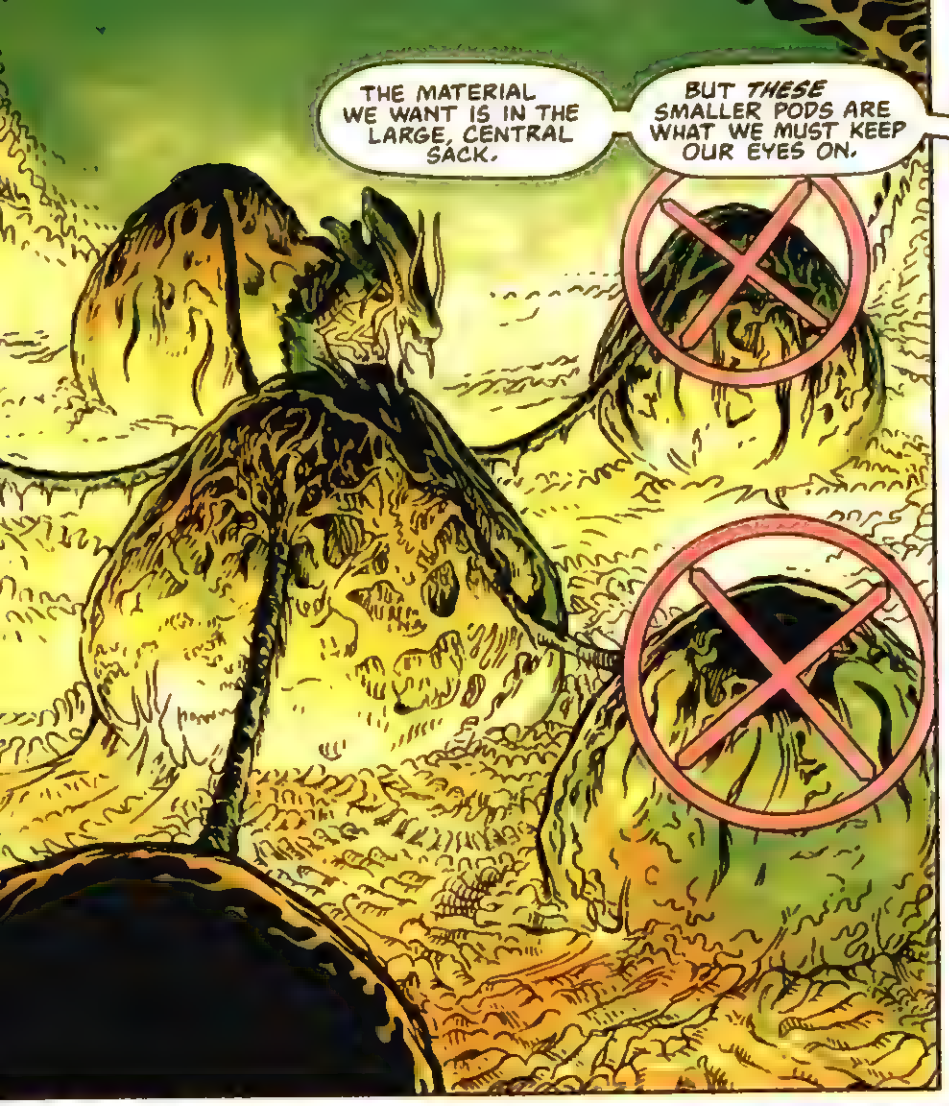

MAJOR LEE?

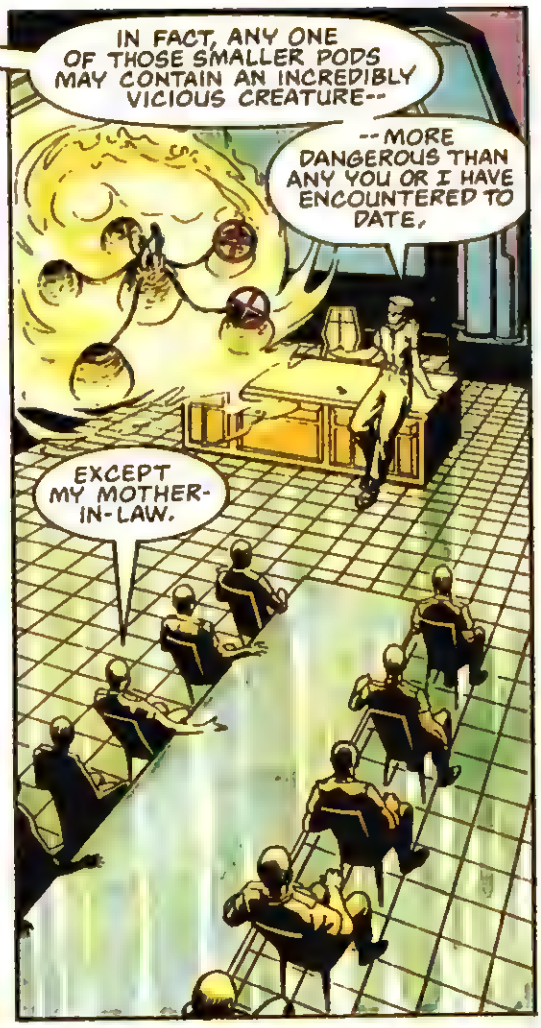

GOD! WHAT A WAY TO WAKE UP!
HEY, IT'S THAT BIG FELLA! CORPORAL, CORPORAL-- DAMN, WHAT'S HIS NAME AGAIN?

HENRIKSEN! HOW ARE YOU?
FINE, SIR.
ZIP
CPL HENRIKSEN

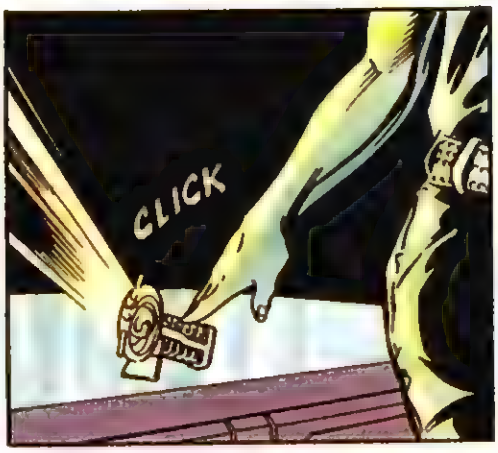
SAY, THAT MAJOR OF YOURS IS A REAL PAIN IN THE ASS, EH?
SHE'S TOUGH, BUT I THINK THAT'S GOOD.

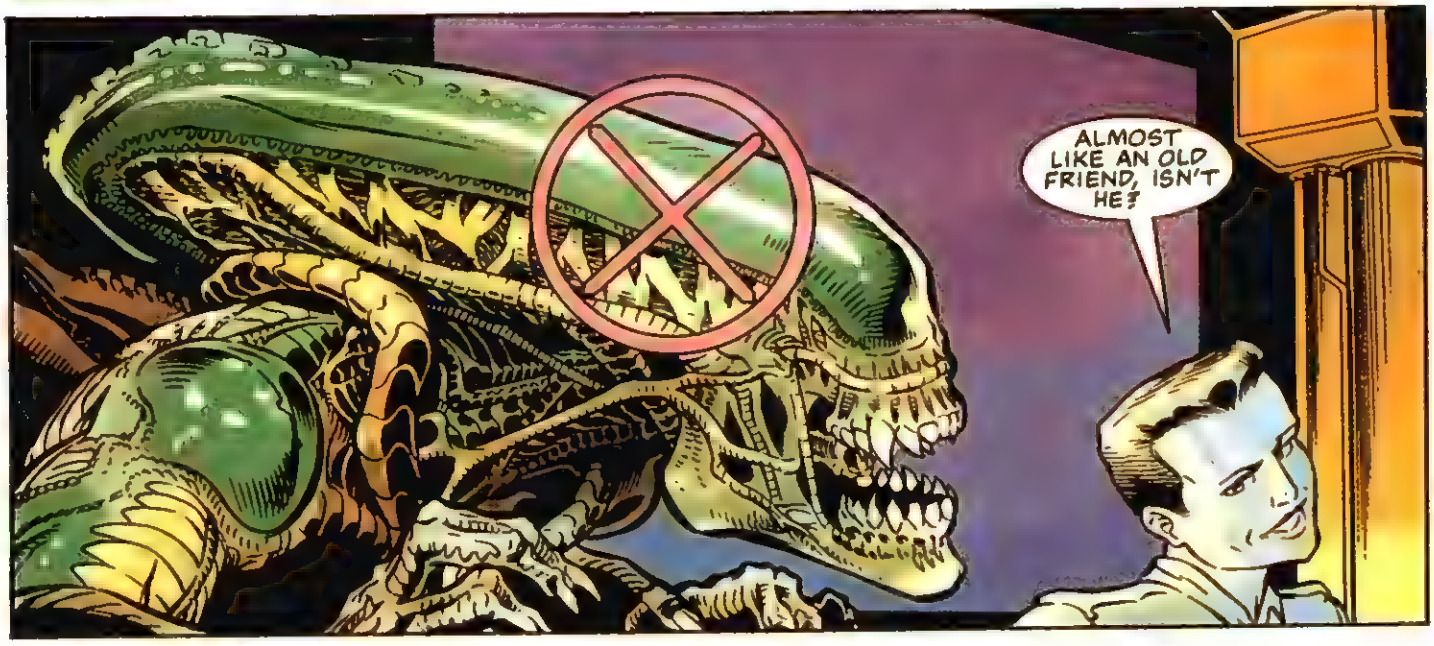

C'MON, YOU DON'T HAVE TO PULL THAT CRAP WITH ME. TELL THE TRUTH, YOU'VE HATED HER FOR MONTHS, RIGHT?
I HAVEN'T BEEN WITH THE CORPS THAT LONG, BUT THE MAJOR HAS ALREADY EARNED MY RESPECT.
SHE'S TOTALLY IN COMMAND BUT SHE STILL TREATS EVERYONE AS AN EQUAL.
THERE AREN'T MANY PEOPLE YOU CAN SAY THAT ABOUT.
KNOW WHAT I MEAN?
SEE YOU AT THE BRIEFING UPDATE, SIR.
YEAH... YEAH...

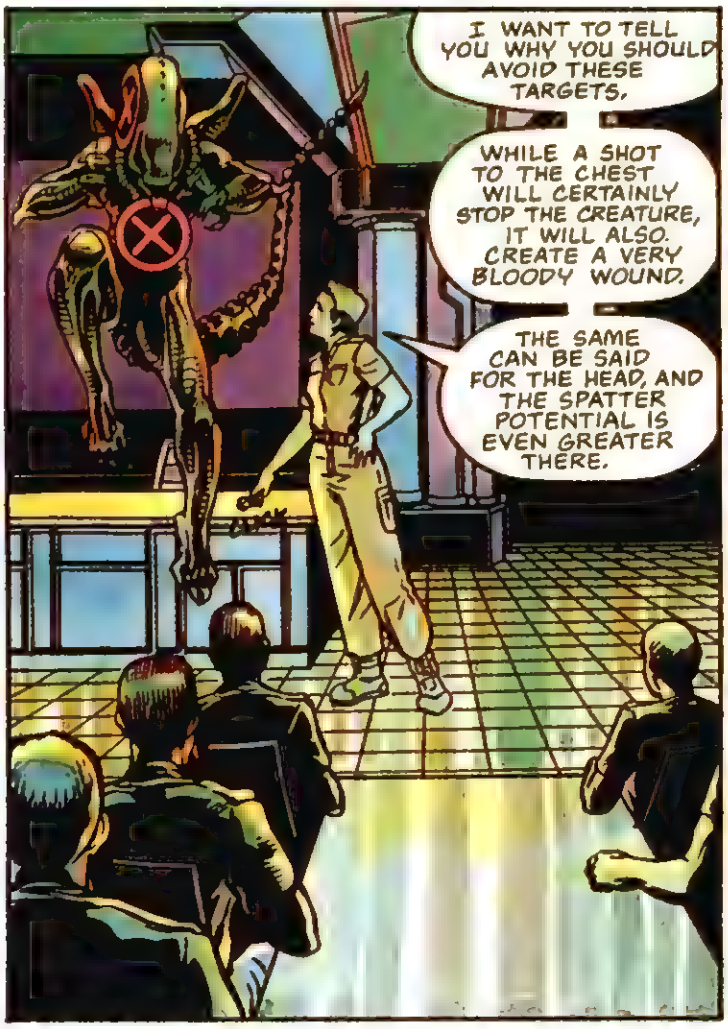

THE MATERIAL WE WANT IS IN THE LARGE, CENTRAL SACK.
BUT *THESE* SMALLER PODS ARE WHAT WE MUST KEEP OUR EYES ON.


IN FACT, ANY ONE OF THOSE SMALLER PODS MAY CONTAIN AN INCREDIBLY VICIOUS CREATURE--
--MORE DANGEROUS THAN ANY YOU OR I HAVE ENCOUNTERED TO DATE.
EXCEPT MY MOTHER-IN-LAW.

ANYWAY, THIS IS ALL SECOND-HAND INFO, AND I CAN'T GUARANTEE ITS ACCURACY.
SO, LET'S MOVE ON TO SOMETHING I KNOW A LITTLE MORE ABOUT.

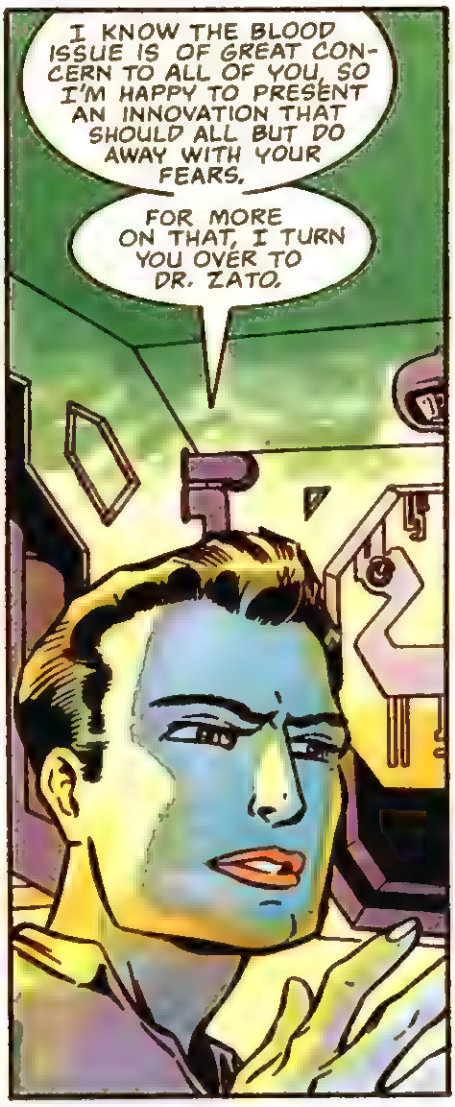

CLICK


ALMOST LIKE AN OLD FRIEND, ISN'T HE?


I WANT TO TELL YOU WHY YOU SHOULD AVOID THESE TARGETS.
WHILE A SHOT TO THE CHEST WILL CERTAINLY STOP THE CREATURE, IT WILL ALSO CREATE A VERY BLOODY WOUND.
THE SAME CAN BE SAID FOR THE HEAD, AND THE SPATTER POTENTIAL IS EVEN GREATER THERE.

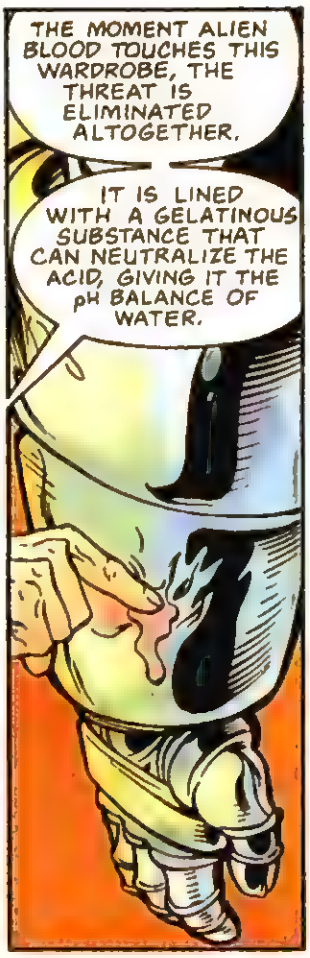
AS MANY OF YOU HAVE ALREADY DISCOVERED, A SHOT TO THE KNEE WILL NOT ONLY HAMPER THE ALIEN'S MOBILITY--

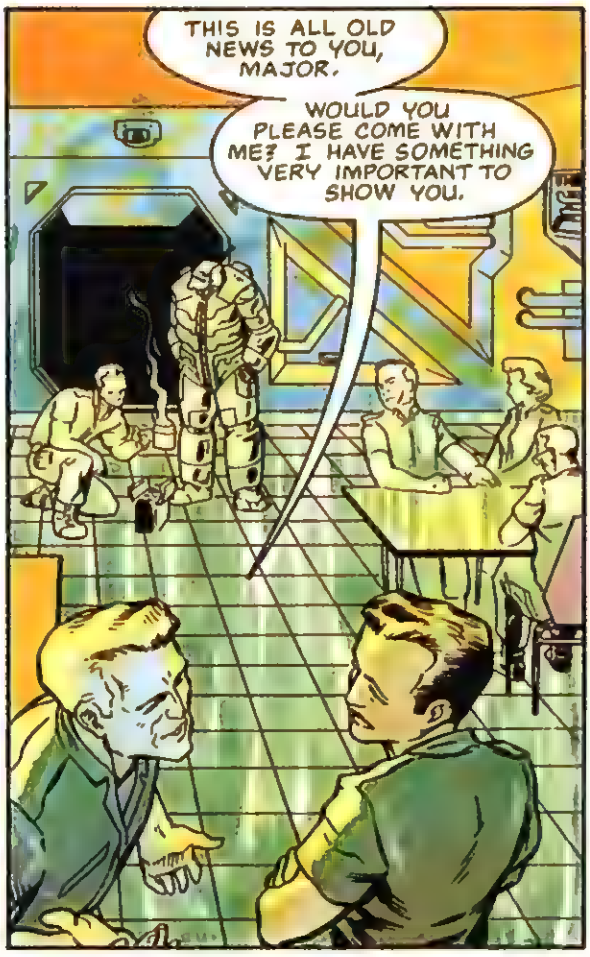
BUT SUCH A WOUND ALSO MINIMIZES BLEEDING AND SPATTER POTENTIAL.
CLICK

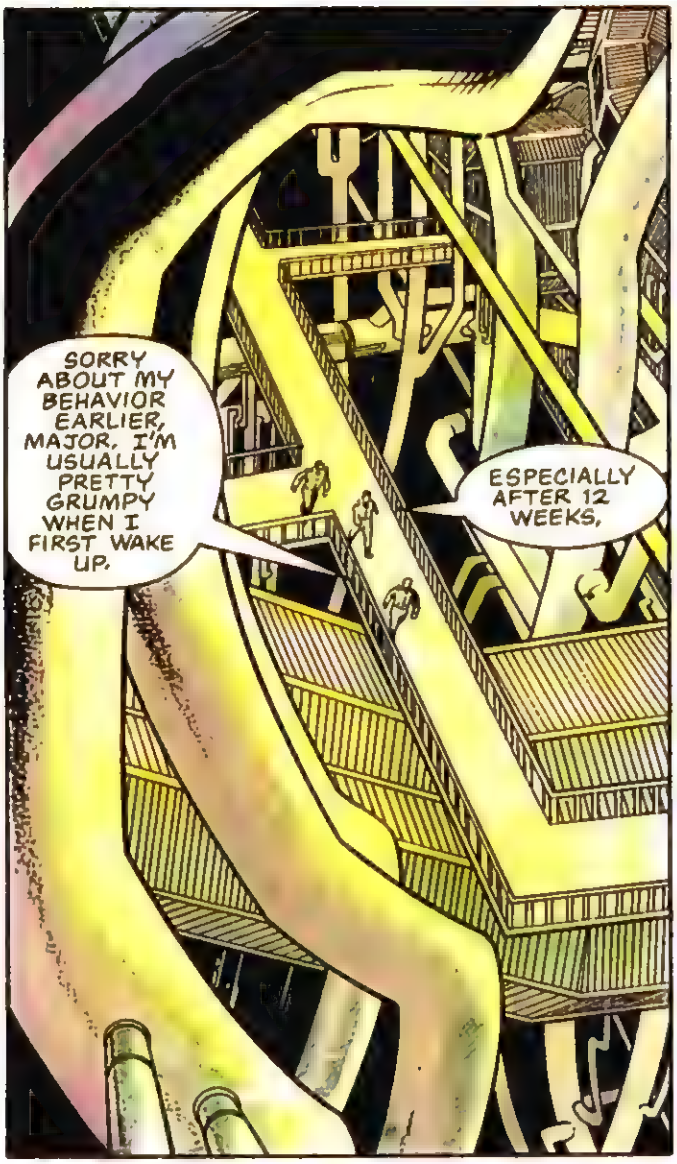

I KNOW THE BLOOD ISSUE IS OF GREAT CONCERN TO ALL OF YOU, SO I'M HAPPY TO PRESENT AN INNOVATION THAT SHOULD ALL BUT DO AWAY WITH YOUR FEARS.
FOR MORE ON THAT, I TURN YOU OVER TO DR. ZATO.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, I GIVE YOU YOUR NEXT BEST FRIEND.
THE Z-110 ACID NEUTRALIZING COMBAT WARDROBE.

EFFORTS TO PRODUCE AN ARMOR RESISTANT TO THE INTENSE ACIDITY OF THE ALIEN BLOOD HAVE PROVED IMPRACTICAL.
TOO HEAVY, AND ALL THAT. THEREFORE, WE MUST NOT RESIST, BUT EXTIRPATE.


THE MOMENT ALIEN BLOOD TOUCHES THIS WARDROBE, THE THREAT IS ELIMINATED ALTOGETHER.
IT IS LINED WITH A GELATINOUS SUBSTANCE THAT CAN NEUTRALIZE THE ACID, GIVING IT THE pH BALANCE OF WATER.


THIS IS ALL OLD NEWS TO YOU, MAJOR.
WOULD YOU PLEASE COME WITH ME? I HAVE SOMETHING VERY IMPORTANT TO SHOW YOU.


SORRY ABOUT MY BEHAVIOR EARLIER, MAJOR. I'M USUALLY PRETTY GRUMPY WHEN I FIRST WAKE UP.
ESPECIALLY AFTER 12 WEEKS.

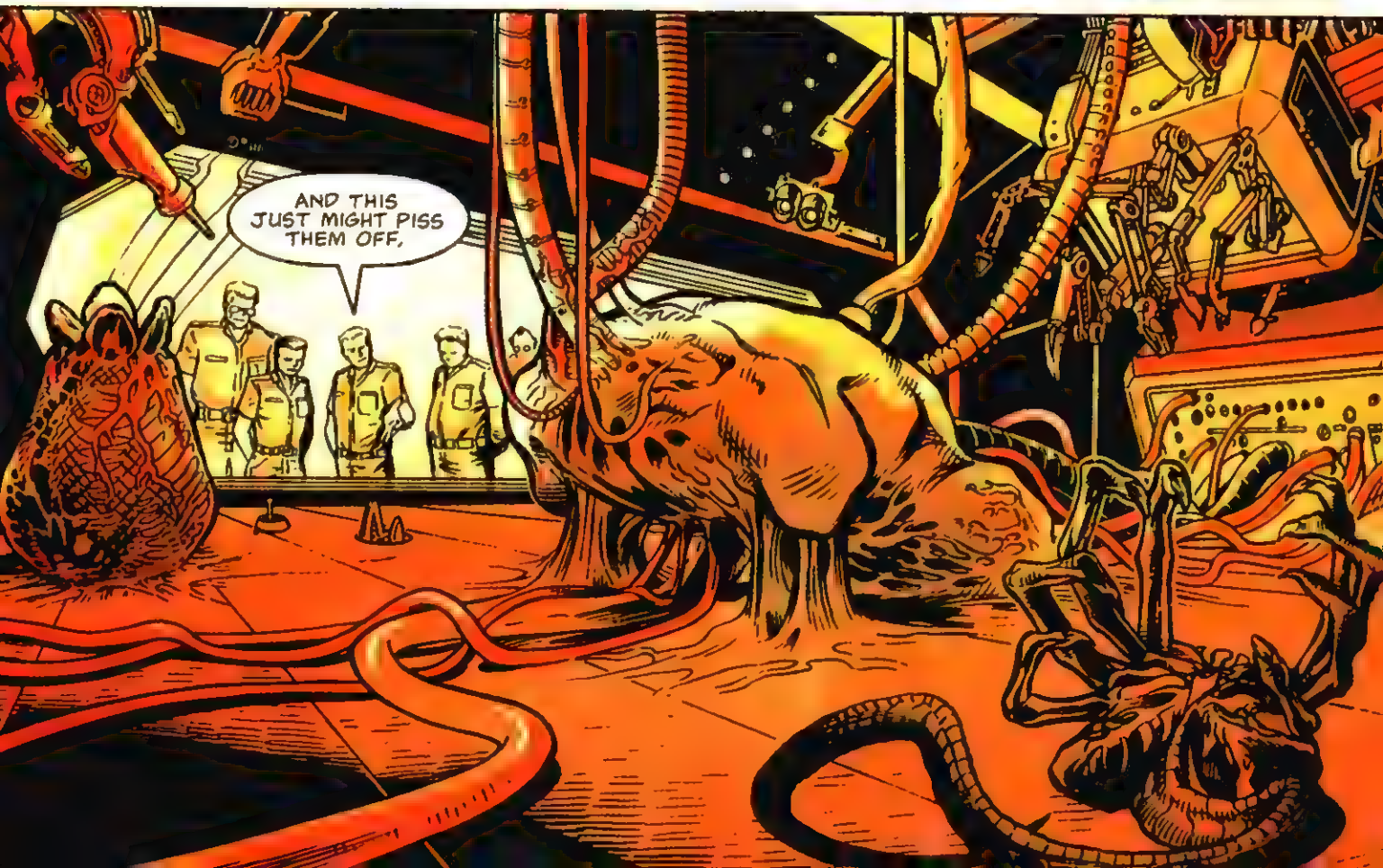
RIGHT.
WHAT I'M ABOUT TO SHOW YOU TWO IS STRICTLY HUSH-HUSH. I DON'T WANT ANYONE TO KNOW ABOUT THIS, ESPECIALLY NOT THE OTHER MEN--
OR WOMEN.

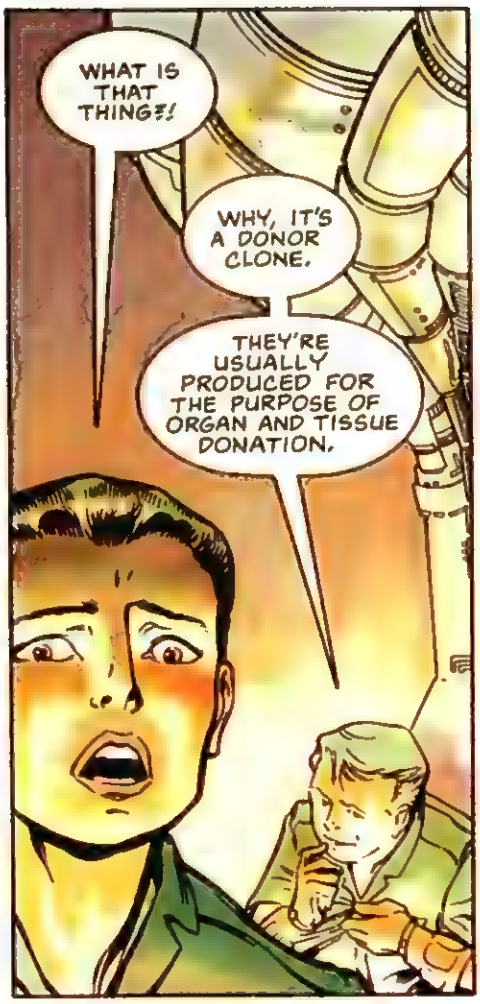
WHAT HAPPENED HERE? ISN'T THIS SUPPOSED TO BE A STORAGE CHAMBER?
YES, AND IN A WAY, IT STILL IS, BUT THE CARGO IS WHAT'S DIFFERENT.

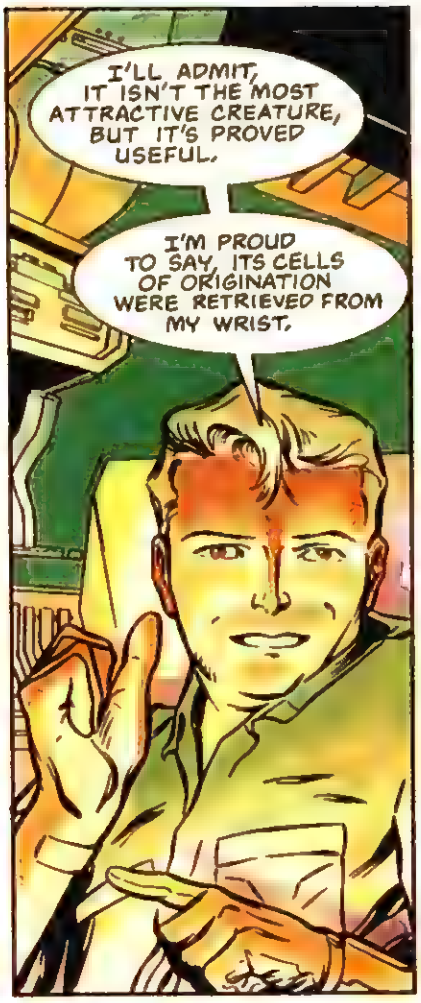
GLAD YOU COULD MAKE IT, MR. GRANT.
I BELIEVE IT'S ABOUT TO START.

MR. GRANT, WHY IS THIS SUCH A BIG SECRET?

WELL, CORPORAL, I KNOW MOST MARINES HAVE COME TO REALLY HATE THE ALIENS.


AND THIS JUST MIGHT PISS THEM OFF.


WHAT IS THAT THING?!
WHY, IT'S A DONOR CLONE.
THEY'RE USUALLY PRODUCED FOR THE PURPOSE OF ORGAN AND TISSUE DONATION.


I'LL ADMIT, IT ISN'T THE MOST ATTRACTIVE CREATURE, BUT IT'S PROVED USEFUL.
I'M PROUD TO SAY, ITS CELLS OF ORIGINATION WERE RETRIEVED FROM MY WRIST.

DR. FRIEL, THE CLONE'S VITAL SIGNS HAVE GONE IRREGULAR.
IT'S BEGINNING.

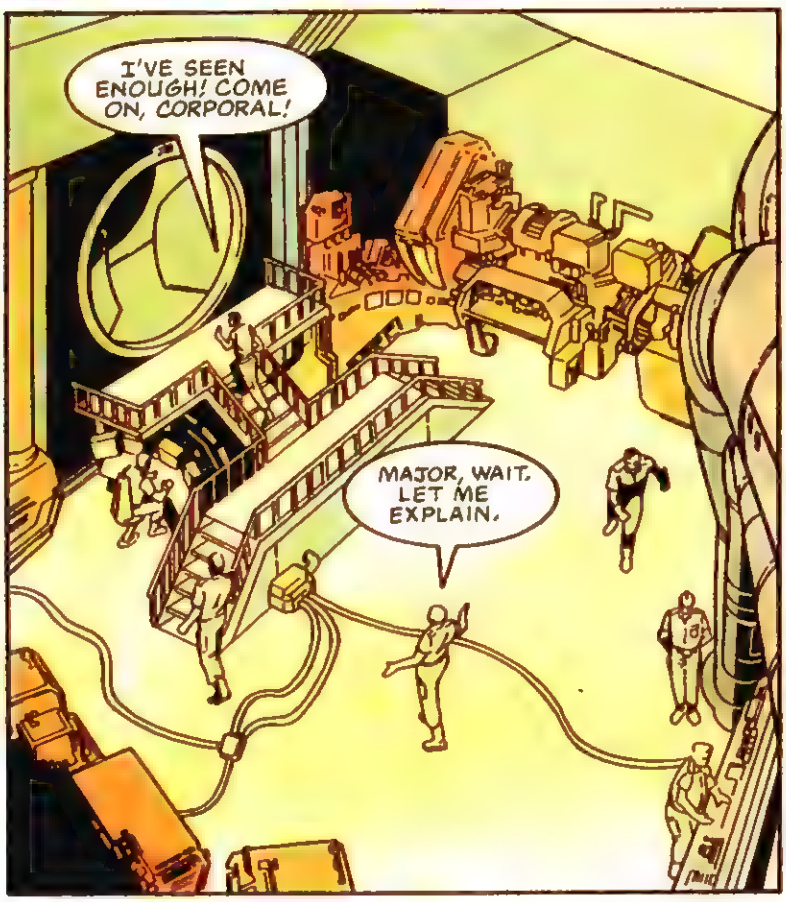
WHAT THE HELL IS GOING ON HERE, GRANT?
WATCH, MAJOR.
JUST WATCH.

MY GOD! I'VE SEEN THIS BEFORE!

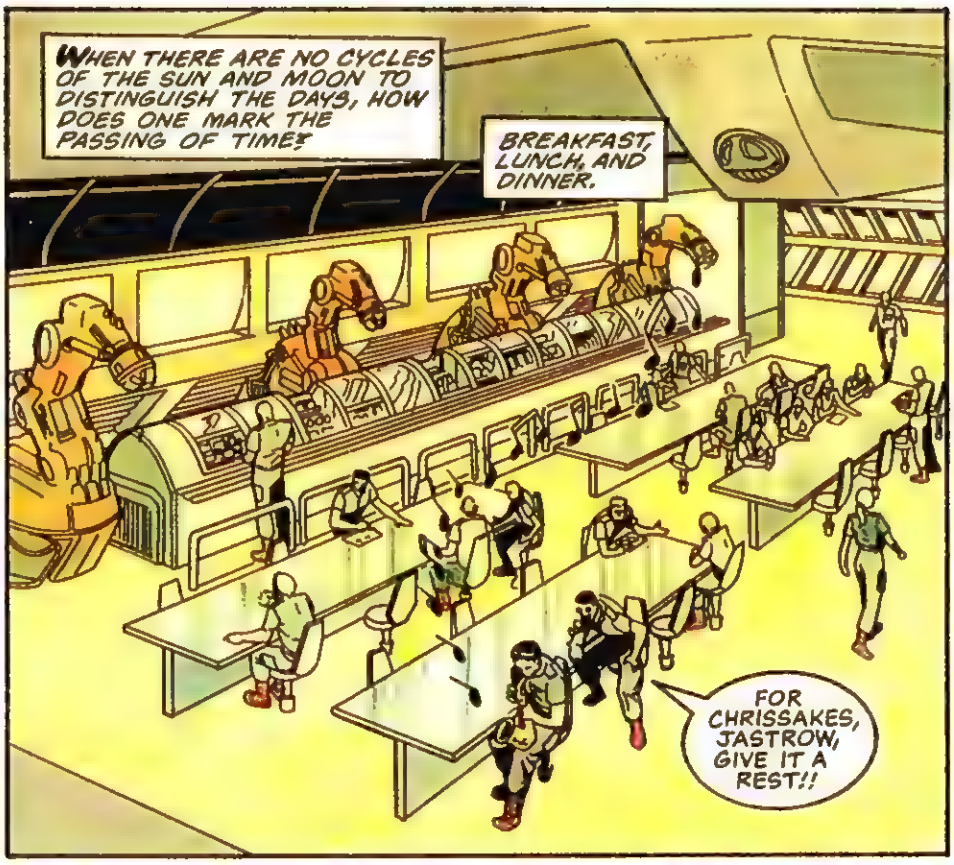
YOU'RE BREEDING ONE OF THOSE DAMN THINGS!
TAKE IT EASY, THE HOST ISN'T REALLY ALIVE; IT CAN'T FEEL ANY PAIN.

HERE IT COMES.

SCREEEEEEE


I'VE SEEN ENOUGH! COME ON, CORPORAL!
MAJOR, WAIT. LET ME EXPLAIN.

"YOU'VE GOT THIS ALL WRONG."


WHEN THERE ARE NO CYCLES OF THE SUN AND MOON TO DISTINGUISH THE DAYS, HOW DOES ONE MARK THE PASSING OF TIME?
BREAKFAST, LUNCH, AND DINNER.
FOR CHRISSAKES, JASTROW, GIVE IT A REST!!

WHASSA MATTER, ELLIS? I THOUGHT YOU LIKED MUSIC.
I LIKE MUSIC FINE, BUT NOT BLARING IN MY EAR, AND NOT WHILE I'M EATING!

JUST A LITTLE ANXIOUS IS ALL, AND WHO CAN BLAME YOU? I MEAN, WE GOT SOME HEAVY STUFF AHEAD OF US.

XENO ZIP
SO I'LL LET YOU HAVE A LITTLE OF MY STASH.

I GOT PLENTY OF MINE LEFT, AND YOU SHOULD SAVE YOURS.
THEY'RE SUPPOSED TO BE FOR ENDURANCE, REMEMBER? AND I DOUBT WE'LL GET MUCH SLEEP ONCE WE TOUCH DOWN AT "BUG" CENTRAL.

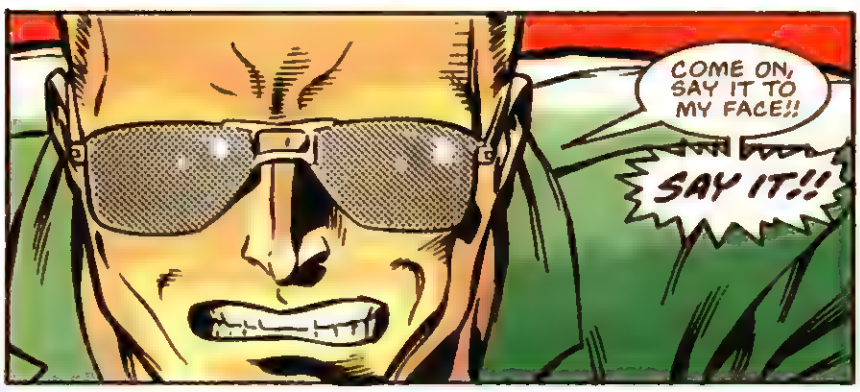
HEY, CHECK IT OUT. HENRIKSEN'S DOING IT AGAIN. HE'S TAKING HIS FOOD TO HIS ROOM.
THEY MAKE MODELS THAT EAT, YOU KNOW.

IT AIN'T JUST THAT. HE WON'T SHOWER WITH US, I NEVER SEEN HIM SHAVE--
--AND, FAR AS I CAN TELL, THIS IS HIS *FIRST* COMBAT MISSION.
U.C.M.C.
JASTROW

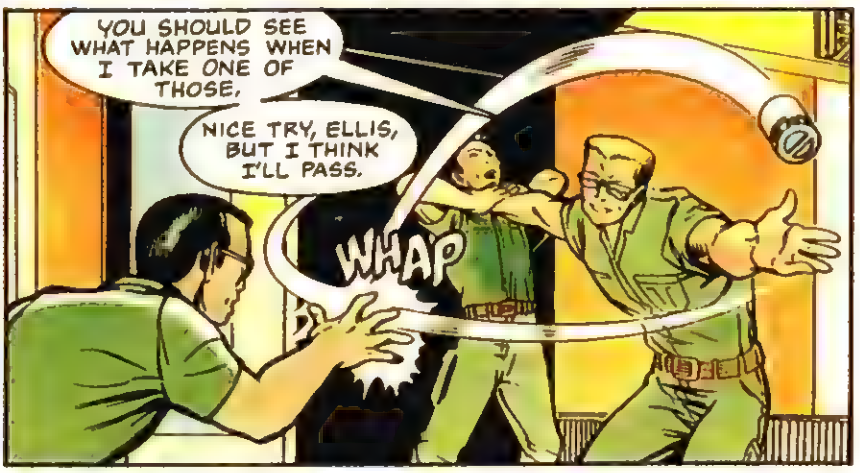
A GUY THAT SIZE, ON A PLANET CRAWLING WITH CRICKETS, AND HE NEVER SAW ANY COMBAT?

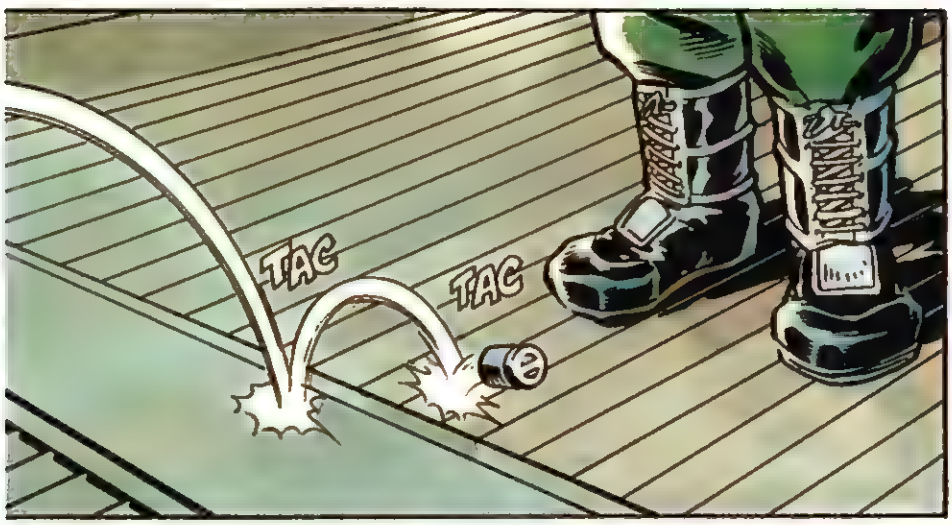
I'M TELLING YOU, THE BASTARD AIN'T HUMAN.

WHY DON'T YOU JUST SAY WHAT'S ON YOUR MIND, PUNK?!


COME ON, SAY IT TO MY FACE!!
SAY IT!!

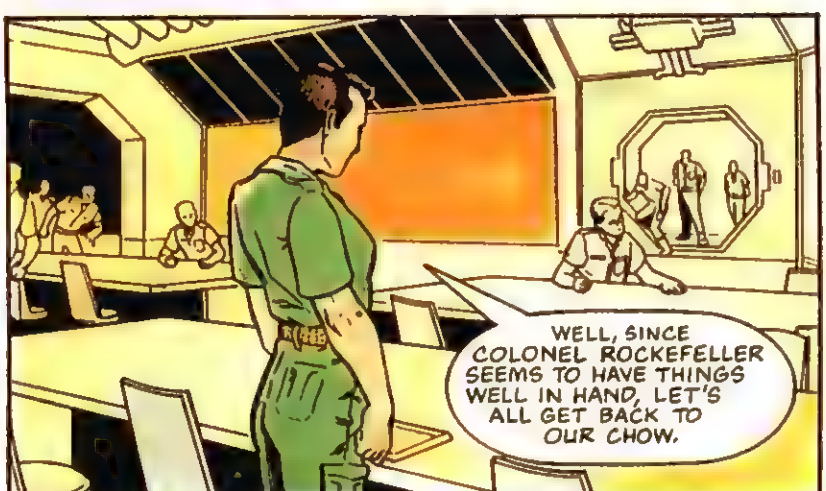
LOOK, MAN, NO ONE WANTS ANY TROUBLE. HERE, TAKE JASTROW'S XENO-ZIP.
THAT SHOULD MAKE THINGS EVEN.
HELL, YOU THINK YOU'VE GOT TROUBLE NOW--


YOU SHOULD SEE WHAT HAPPENS WHEN I TAKE ONE OF THOSE.
NICE TRY, ELLIS, BUT I THINK I'LL PASS.
WHAP


TAC
TAC

YOU KNOW, CORPORAL, I ADMIRE A MAN WHO DOESN'T TAKE ANY CRAP, I HONESTLY DO.
BUT THE TRUTH IS, I NEED EVERY LAST ONE OF THESE TROOPS FOR THIS OPERATION.

YOU DON'T HAVE TO KISS AND MAKE UP, BUT PLEASE DON'T MASH HIS SKULL, OKAY?
THANKS.

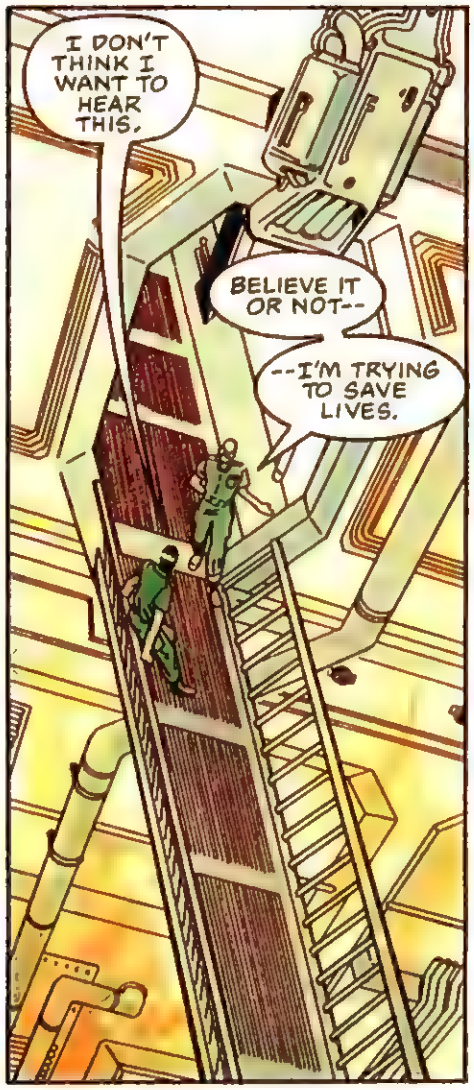

WELL, SINCE COLONEL ROCKEFELLER SEEMS TO HAVE THINGS WELL IN HAND, LET'S ALL GET BACK TO OUR CHOW.

MAJOR?
THINK WE COULD TALK A MINUTE?
PLEASE?

I COULD HAVE HANDLED THAT, MR. GRANT.
YES, I KNOW.
THOSE PEOPLE HAVE TO KNOW, NOT YOU. PRETTY SOON, THEIR LIVES WILL DEPEND ON HOW MUCH THEY RESPECT ME.

MAJOR, THEY ALL RESPECT YOU, AND WITH GOOD REASON.
THERE'S NO WAY MY BREAKING UP A HISSY FIT IS GOING TO UNDERMINE THAT RESPECT.

MAYBE SO, BUT YOU' STI--
THIS IS NOT WHAT I WANTED TO TALK ABOUT.
I WANT TO EXPLAIN THE ALIEN INCUBATION.


I DON'T THINK I WANT TO HEAR THIS.
BELIEVE IT OR NOT--
--I'M TRYING TO SAVE LIVES.

WHAT?!! WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?!

YOU'RE RISKING GOOD MARINE LIVES FOR THIS FRIGGING JELLY, FOR PROFIT, YOU RUTHLESS BASTARD!!
AS WELL AS MY OWN LIFE, AND I'LL HAVE TO DO IT AGAIN AS SOON AS I RUN OUT OF THE STUFF, UNLESS I CAN BRING A SOURCE HOME WITH ME.

NO WAY, MISTER! IF YOU WANT TO KIDNAP THAT QUEEN MOTHER THING, YOU'RE NOT USING MY PEOPLE!!
THAT'S NOT WHAT I MEANT. JUST HEAR ME OUT.

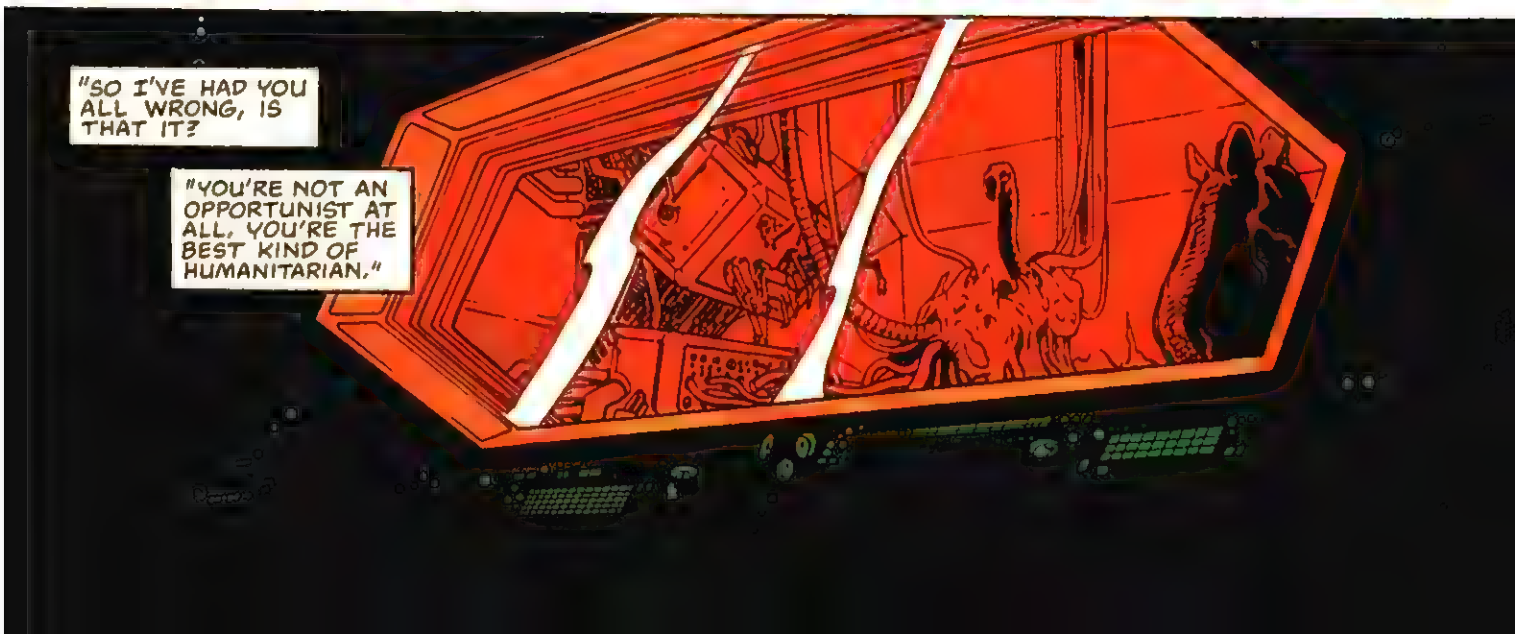
MY RESEARCHERS TELL ME THAT IF WE FEED THAT INFANT CREATURE DOWN BELOW ON THIS JELLY--
--IF IT MATURES TO QUEENHOOD SURROUNDED BY THE GOOP, IT WILL BECOME A QUEEN MOTHER ITSELF.

"YES, ULTIMATELY, MY GOAL IS TO MAKE MONEY.

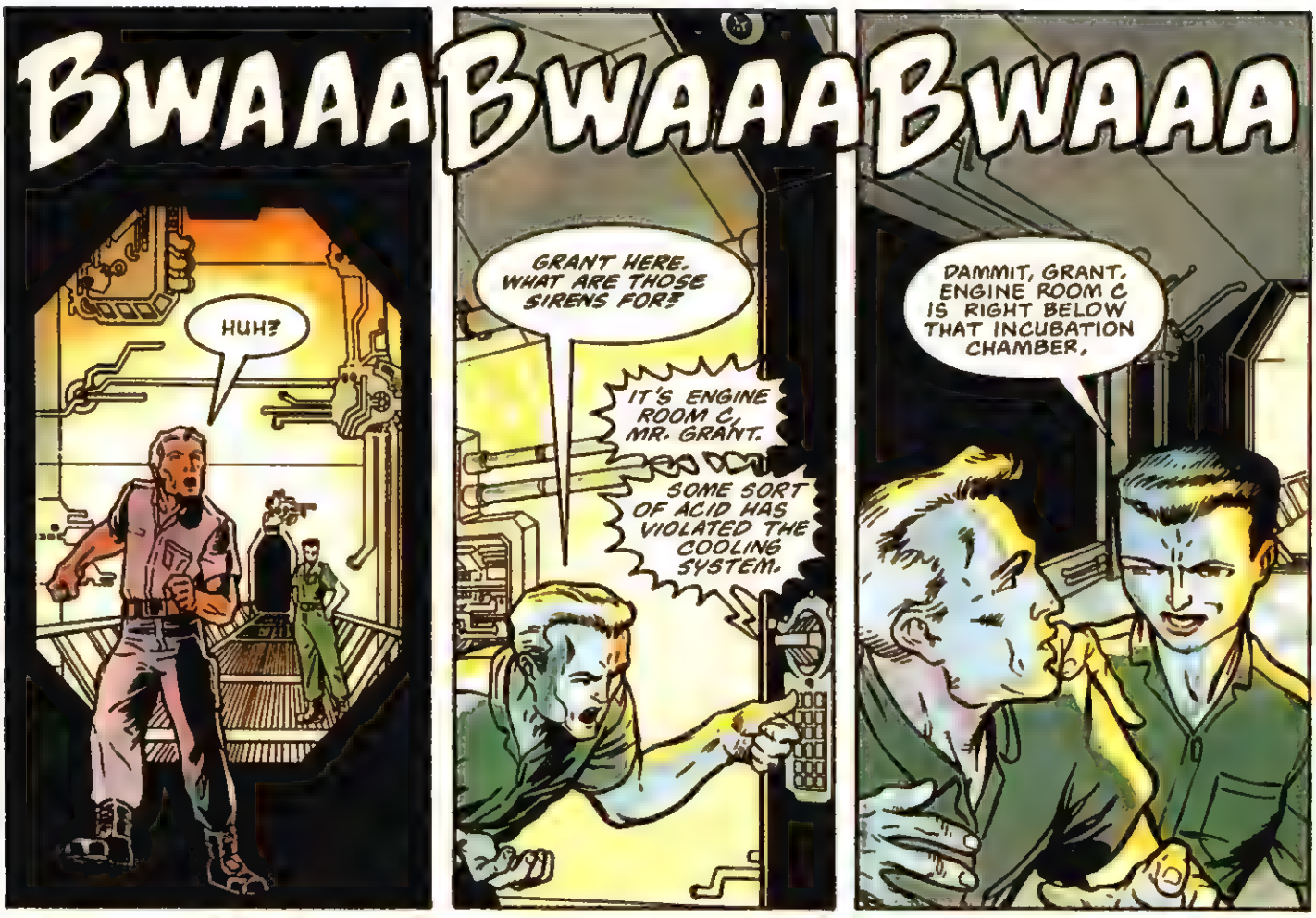
"YOU CALL IT RUTHLESS.

"I CALL IT SURVIVAL.

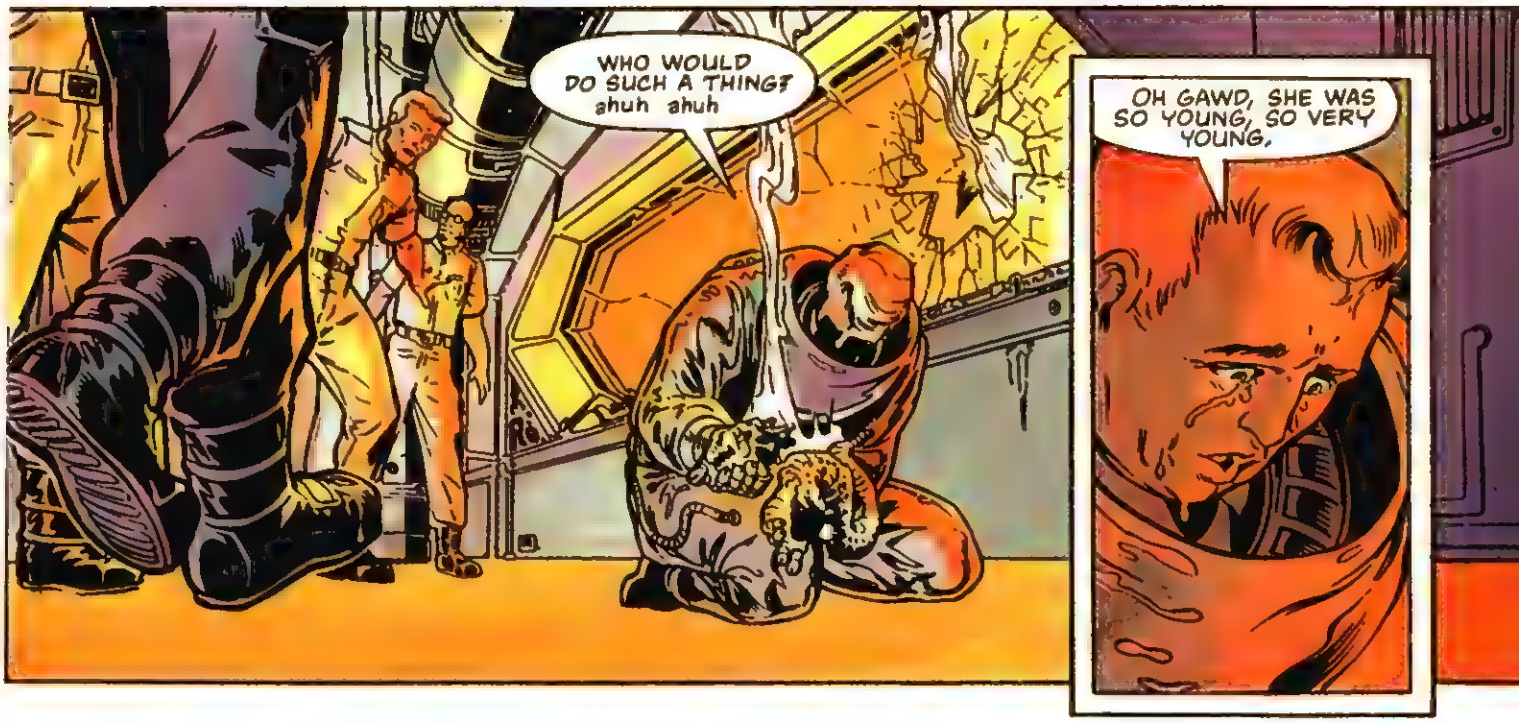
"BUT THE TRUTH IS, ONCE I'VE GOT A SOURCE OF THIS JELLY CLOSE TO HOME--
"--I'LL NEVER HAVE TO RISK ANOTHER LIFE TO GET IT."

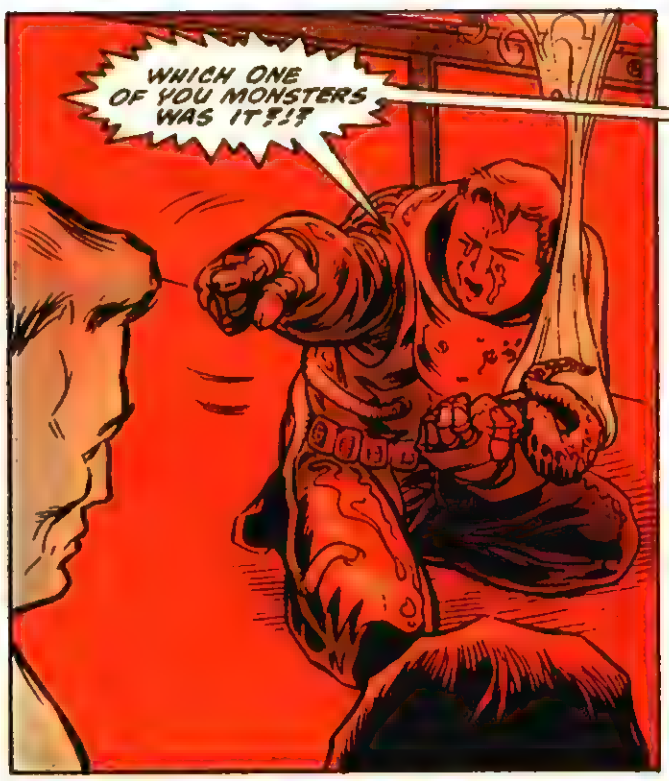

"SO I'VE HAD YOU ALL WRONG, IS THAT IT?
"YOU'RE NOT AN OPPORTUNIST AT ALL. YOU'RE THE BEST KIND OF HUMANITARIAN."

"ALL RIGHT, THAT'S ENOUGH."
"NO, I MEAN IT, I'M SEEING YOU IN A NEW LIGHT.
CLICK
"WHAT'S YOUR NEXT MOVE, SAINT DAN?
"I'VE GOT IT! HOW ABOUT WORLD PEACE?"
"I'M SORRY, MAJOR, I THOUGHT A FULL EXPLANATION MIGHT IMPROVE OUR SHAKY PARTNERSHIP.
"BUT IF YOU INSIST ON KEEPING A BARRIER BETWEEN US--
"--THEN TO HELL WITH YOU!!!"
POW
POW
POW
POW
POW
SSSSSSSSSSSSS


BWAAA
HUH?
BWAAA
GRANT HERE. WHAT ARE THOSE SIRENS FOR?
IT'S ENGINE ROOM C, MR. GRANT.
SOME SORT OF ACID HAS VIOLATED THE COOLING SYSTEM.
BWAAA
DAMMIT, GRANT, ENGINE ROOM C IS RIGHT BELOW THAT INCUBATION CHAMBER.

OUT OF THE WAY, YOU IDIOTS!
I SAID MOVE IT!


WHO WOULD DO SUCH A THING? ahuh ahuh
OH GAWD, SHE WAS SO YOUNG, SO VERY YOUNG.


WHICH ONE OF YOU MONSTERS WAS IT?!?

WHICH ONE OF YOU KILLED MY BABY!?!

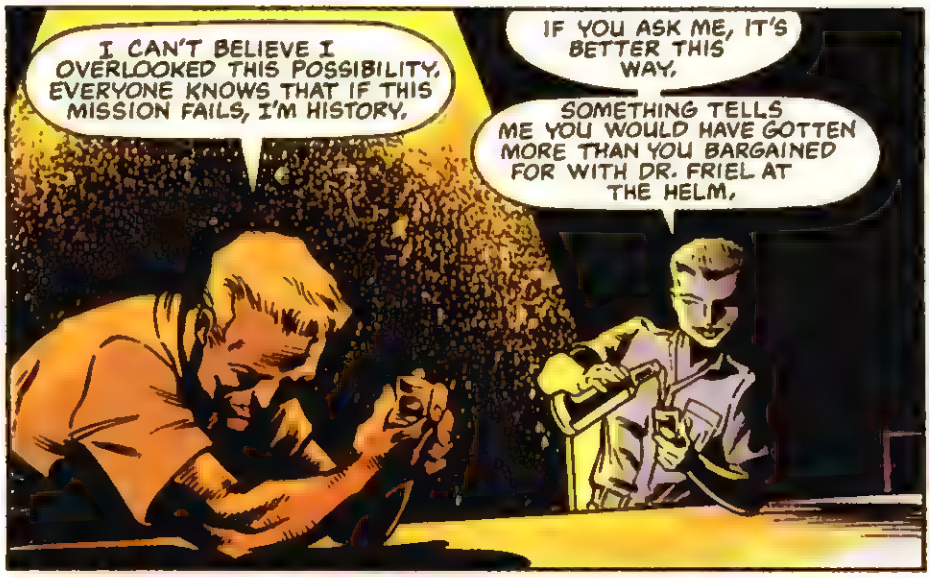
THINGS LOOK OKAY DOWN BELOW. JUST SOME MINOR DAMAGE.
GOOD, GLAD TO HEAR IT.
MAJOR, CAN YOU ACCOUNT FOR THIS RIFLE?

IT DOESN'T BELONG TO ANY OF MY PEOPLE, IF THAT'S WHAT YOU'RE IMPLYING.
THERE'S A GUN AND SOME AMMO MISSING FROM THE SURPLUS LOCKER BELOW, AND EVERYONE ON THE SHIP HAS EQUAL ACCESS TO THAT.

BUT...
...NOT EVERYONE ON THE SHIP KNEW ABOUT THE CREATURE --DID THEY?

THE U.S.S. RAZZIA HAS LOCKED INTO ORBIT AROUND ITS DESTINATION.
10 HOURS FROM NOW, A LANDING PARTY WILL DESCEND TO THE PLANET'S SURFACE.
THE MEMBERS OF THE CREW DO THEIR BEST TO GET SOME REST.
MOST OF THEM.

MIND IF I JOIN YOU?
I WISH YOU WOULD.

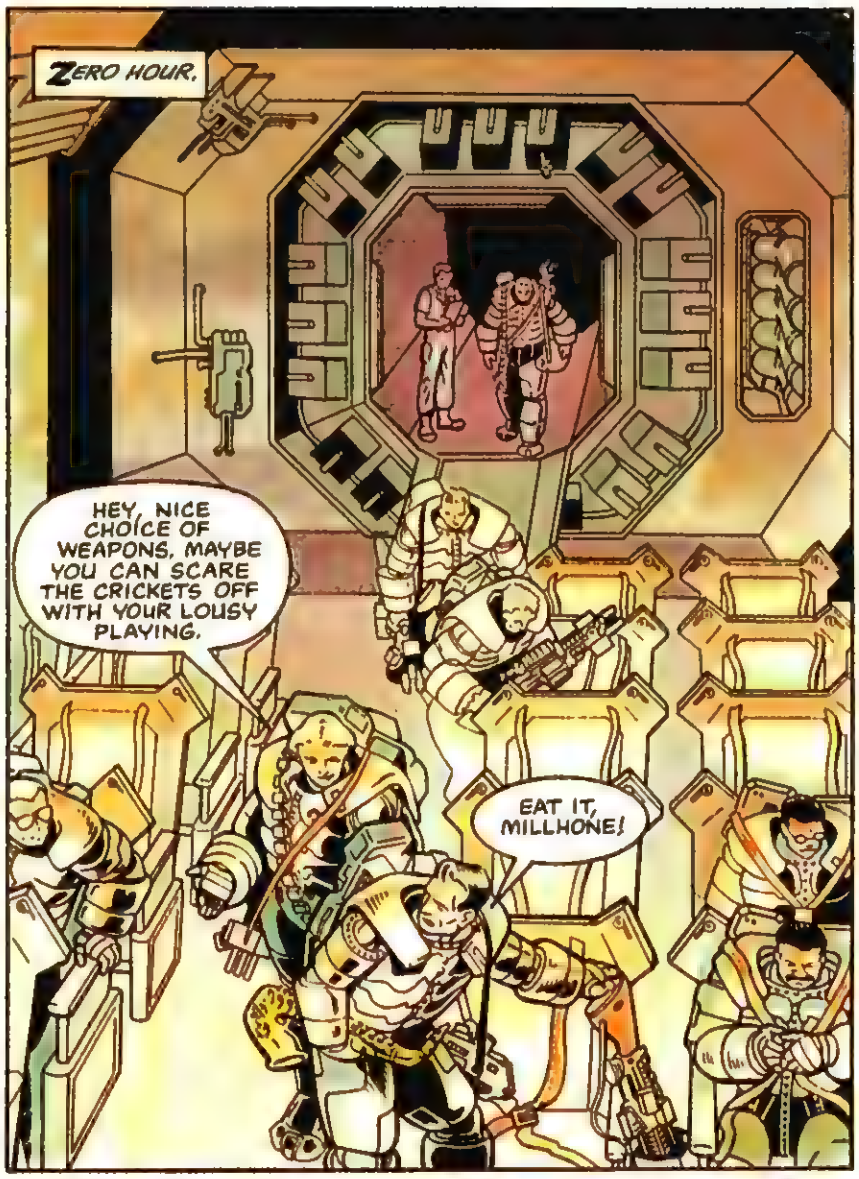

I CAN'T BELIEVE I OVERLOOKED THIS POSSIBILITY. EVERYONE KNOWS THAT IF THIS MISSION FAILS, I'M HISTORY.
IF YOU ASK ME, IT'S BETTER THIS WAY.
SOMETHING TELLS ME YOU WOULD HAVE GOTTEN MORE THAN YOU BARGAINED FOR WITH DR. FRIEL AT THE HELM.

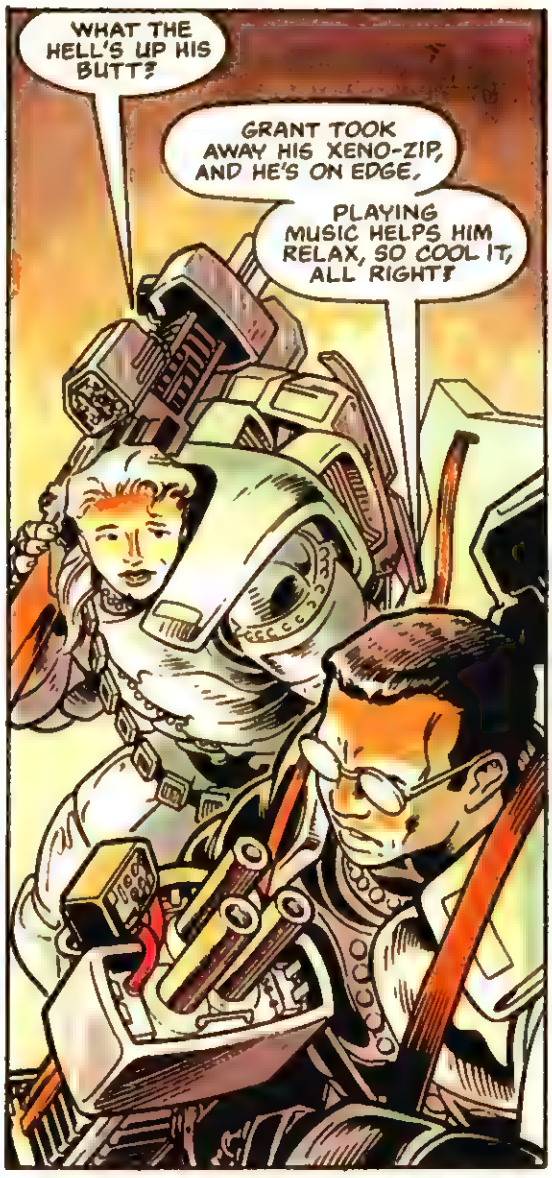
YOU'RE PROBABLY RIGHT, BUT THAT ISN'T THE POINT.
THIS SABOTAGE WILL CONTINUE, AND A LOT MORE THAN MONEY COULD BE LOST NEXT TIME.

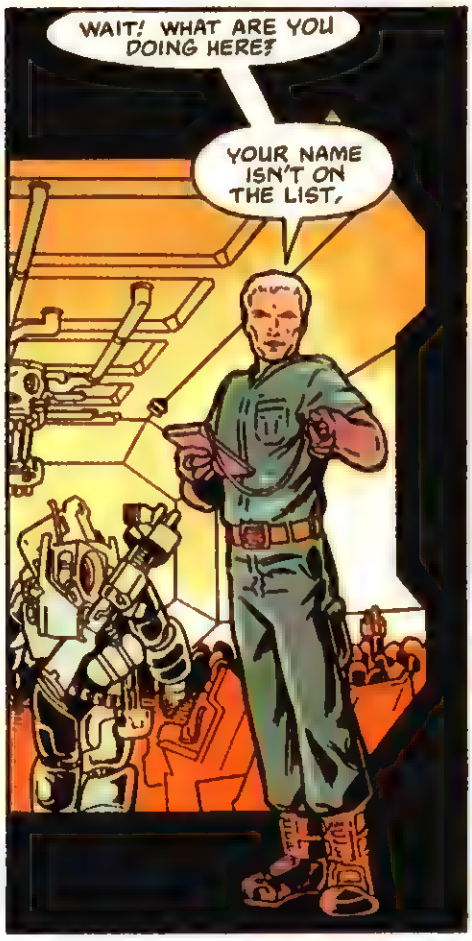
IT'S HARD FOR ME TO BE SCARED OF A CORPORATE SPY WHEN I'VE BEEN FIGHTING MONSTERS FOR YEARS.

AND HOW OFTEN DID YOU RUN INTO INFILTRATION?
DON'T YOU SEE, YOU AND YOUR SOLDIERS HAVE ALWAYS BEEN UNITED AGAINST AN OBVIOUS THREAT.

TAKE IT FROM SOMEONE WHO KNOWS--
--NOTHING IS DEADLIER THAN THE ENEMY WITHIN.

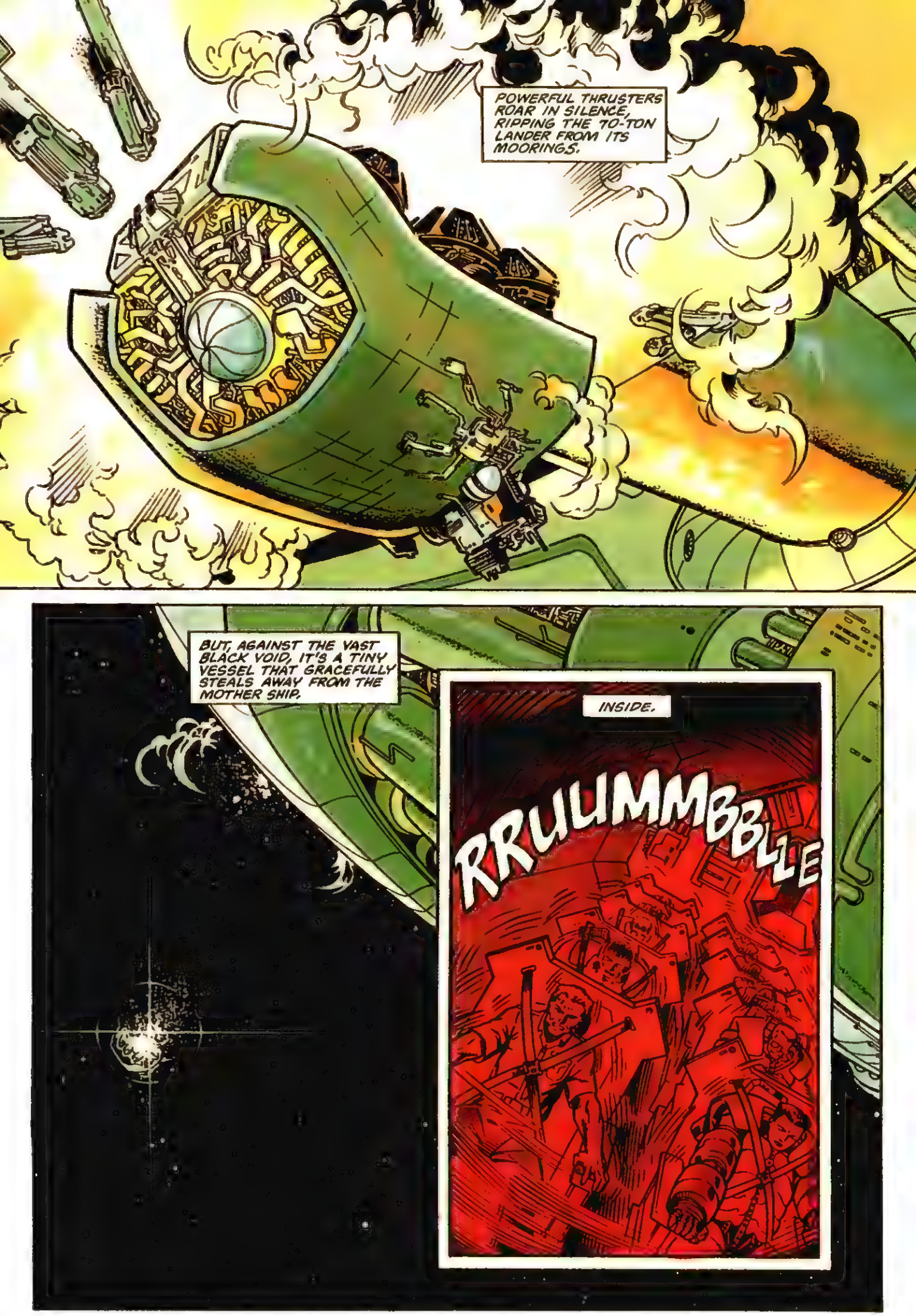

ZERO HOUR.
HEY, NICE CHOICE OF WEAPONS. MAYBE YOU CAN SCARE THE CRICKETS OFF WITH YOUR LOUSY PLAYING.
EAT IT, MILLHONE!

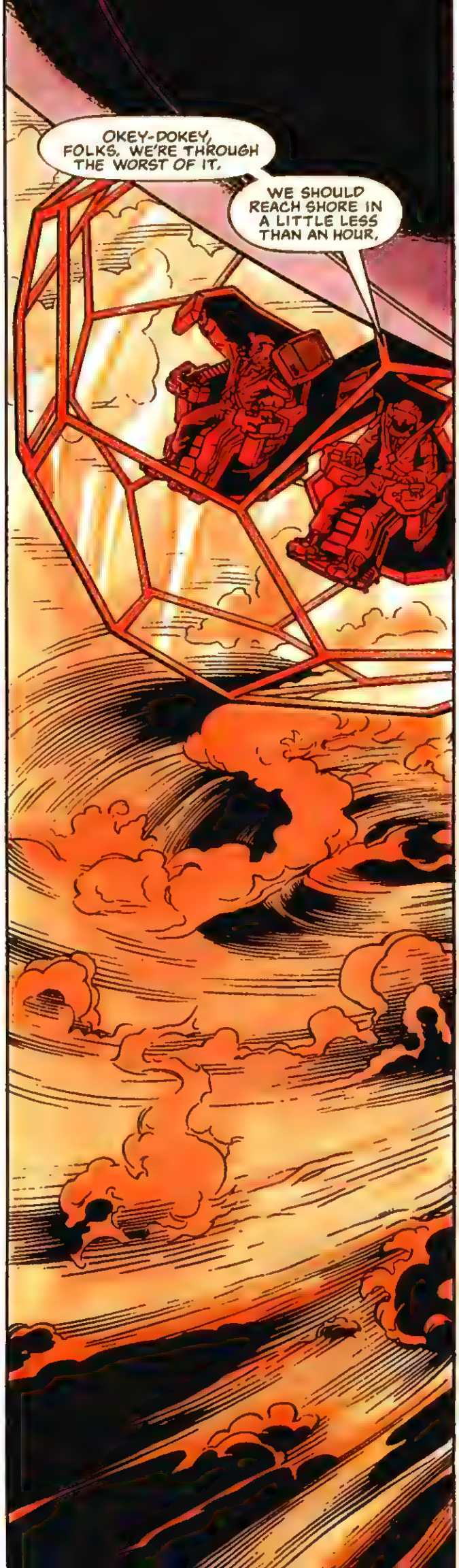

WHAT THE HELL'S UP HIS BUTT?
GRANT TOOK AWAY HIS XENO-ZIP, AND HE'S ON EDGE.
PLAYING MUSIC HELPS HIM RELAX, SO COOL IT, ALL RIGHT?


WAIT! WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?
YOUR NAME ISN'T ON THE LIST.

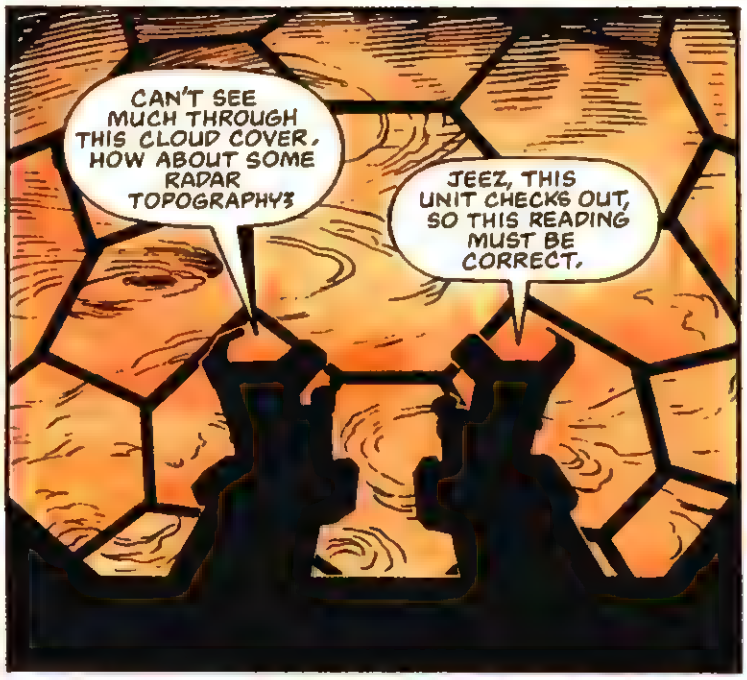
WELL, DR. FRIEL WAS SUPPOSED TO MAKE THE LANDING--
BUT HE'S IN NO CONDITION TO WORK RIGHT NOW.

DON'T WORRY, MR. GRANT, I KNOW JUST WHAT TO DO.
OKAY, PEOPLE, LET'S GET STRAPPED IN. WE'RE ABOUT TO DISENGAGE.


POWERFUL THRUSTERS ROAR IN SILENCE, RIPPING THE 70-TON LANDER FROM ITS MOORINGS.
BUT, AGAINST THE VAST BLACK VOID, IT'S A TINY VESSEL THAT GRACEFULLY STEALS AWAY FROM THE MOTHER SHIP.
INSIDE.
RRUUMMBBLLE

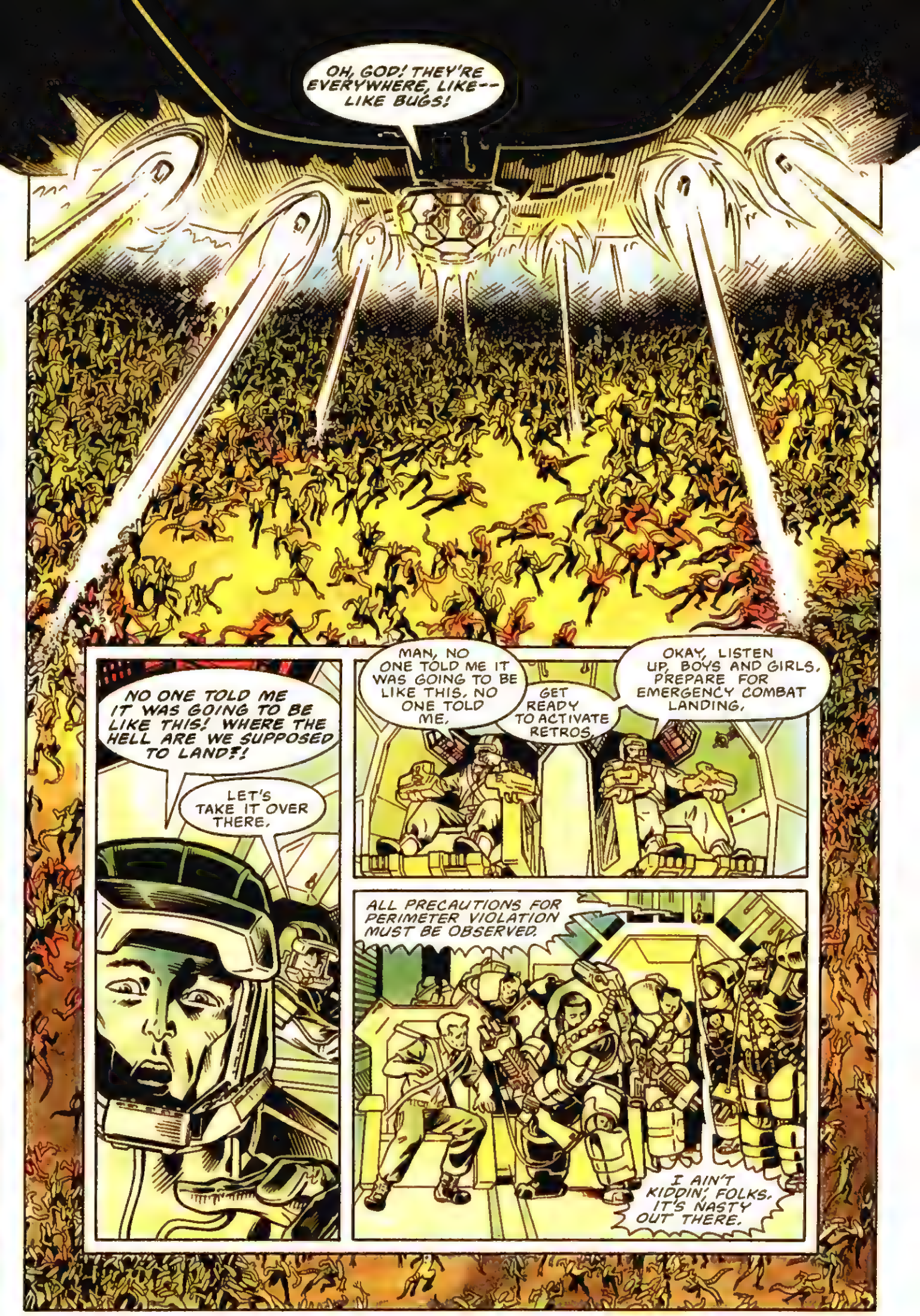

OKEY-DOKEY, FOLKS. WE'RE THROUGH THE WORST OF IT.
WE SHOULD REACH SHORE IN A LITTLE LESS THAN AN HOUR.

SO SIT BACK, AND ENJOY THE FLIGHT.


CAN'T SEE MUCH THROUGH THIS CLOUD COVER. HOW ABOUT SOME RADAR TOPOGRAPHY?
JEEZ, THIS UNIT CHECKS OUT, SO THIS READING MUST BE CORRECT.

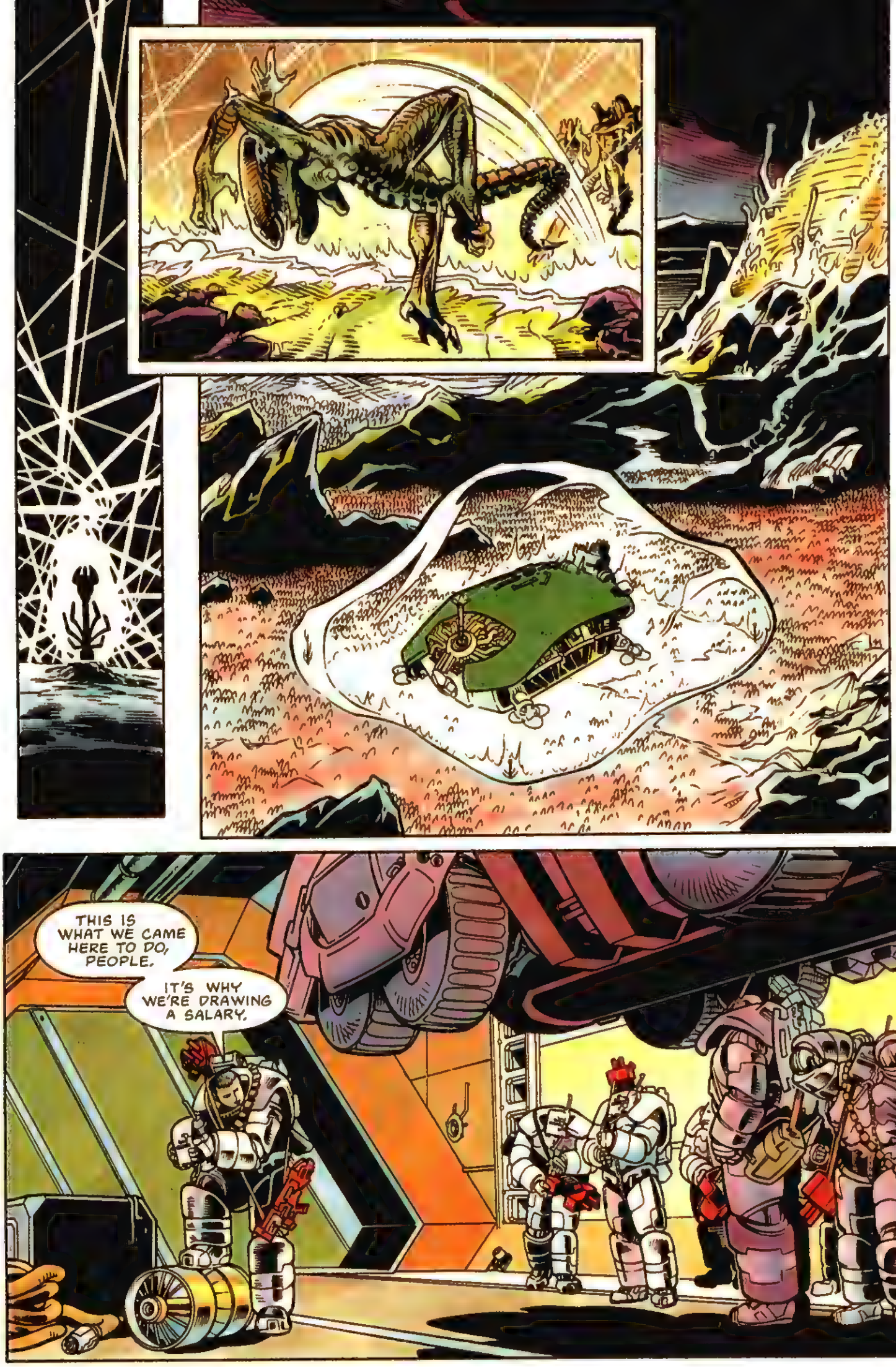
YEAH? SO THEN WHAT'S IT SAY?
WELL, JUDGING FROM THE SURFACE ACTIVITY--

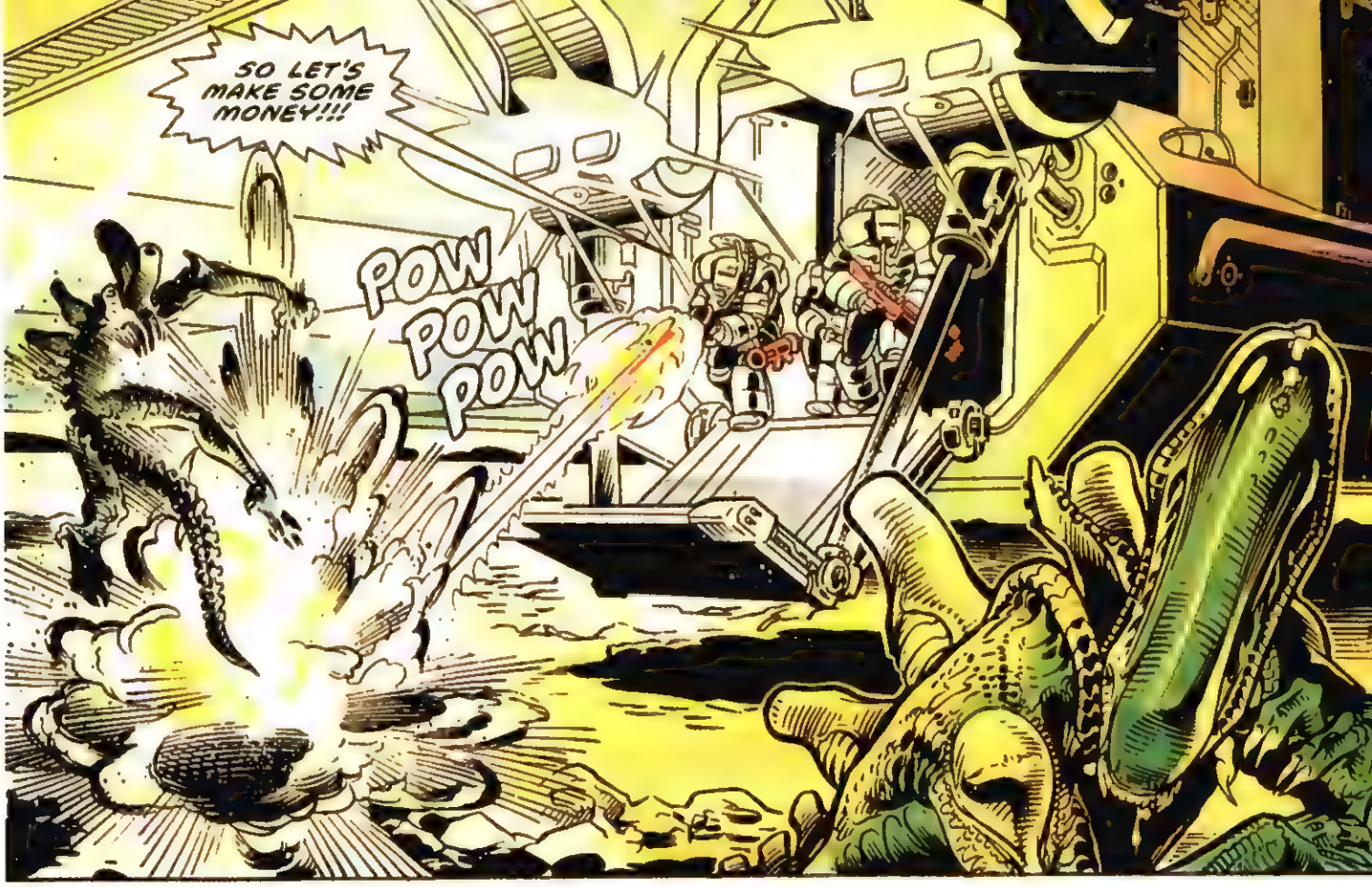
"--THERE'S A WAR GOING ON DOWN THERE."


OH, GOD! THEY'RE EVERYWHERE, LIKE-- LIKE BUGS!
NO ONE TOLD ME IT WAS GOING TO BE LIKE THIS! WHERE THE HELL ARE WE SUPPOSED TO LAND?!
LET'S TAKE IT OVER THERE.
MAN, NO ONE TOLD ME IT WAS GOING TO BE LIKE THIS. NO ONE TOLD ME.
GET READY TO ACTIVATE RETROS.
OKAY, LISTEN UP, BOYS AND GIRLS. PREPARE FOR EMERGENCY COMBAT LANDING.
ALL PRECAUTIONS FOR PERIMETER VIOLATION MUST BE OBSERVED.
I AIN'T KIDDIN', FOLKS. IT'S NASTY OUT THERE.

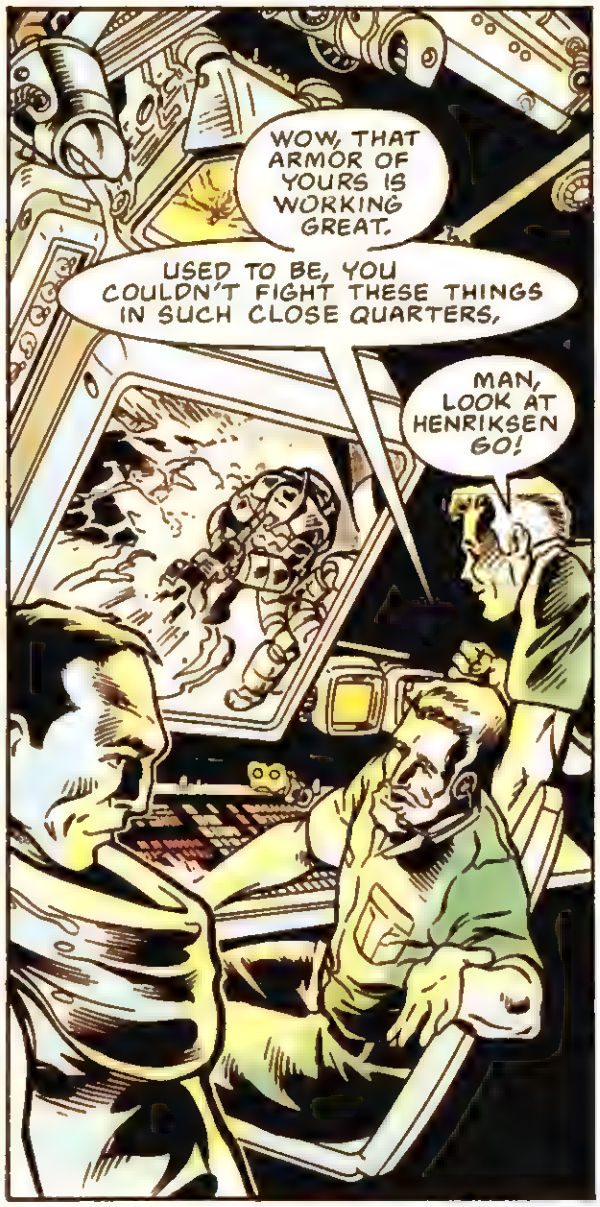
RRRRRRRRRRR
ALL RIGHT, O'CONNOR, I'M CUTTING THE ENGINES.
DO YOUR DUTY.
ROGER, SKIPPER.
CLICK!

WHIRRR
POOM!
CHUNK
CHUNK
CLINK
SPEED IT UP, O'CONNOR. THE ENEMY IS CLOSING IN.
OUTWALL ACTIVATION HAS BEEN INITIATED.
CLACK

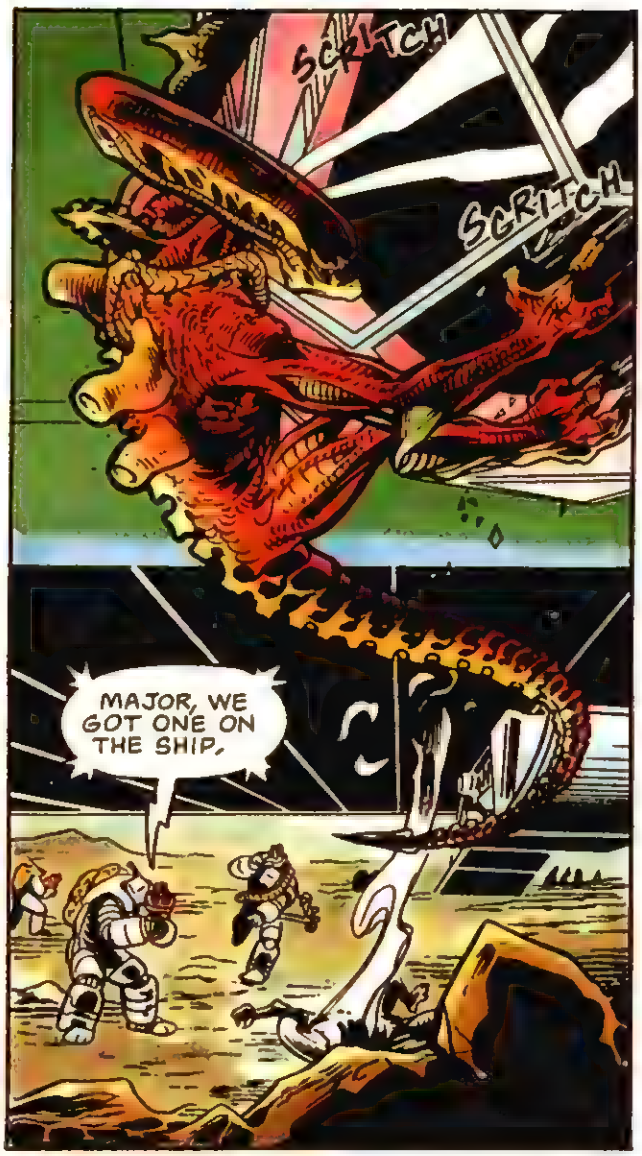

THIS IS WHAT WE CAME HERE TO DO, PEOPLE.
IT'S WHY WE'RE DRAWING A SALARY.

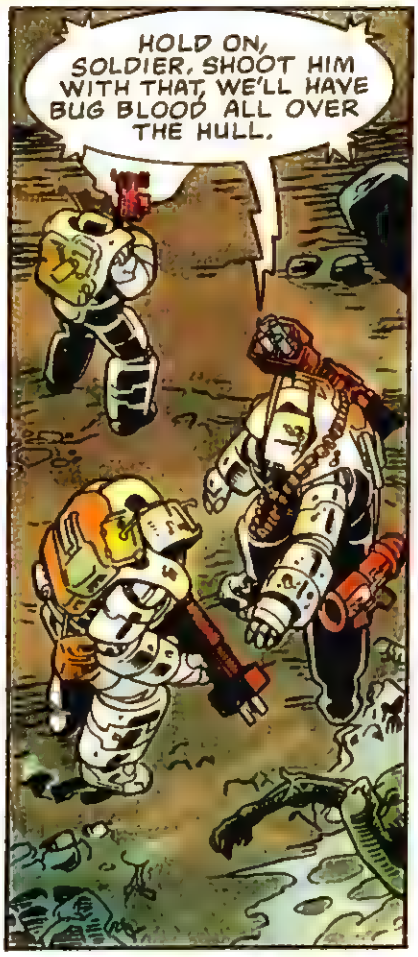

SO LET'S MAKE SOME MONEY!!!
POW POW POW

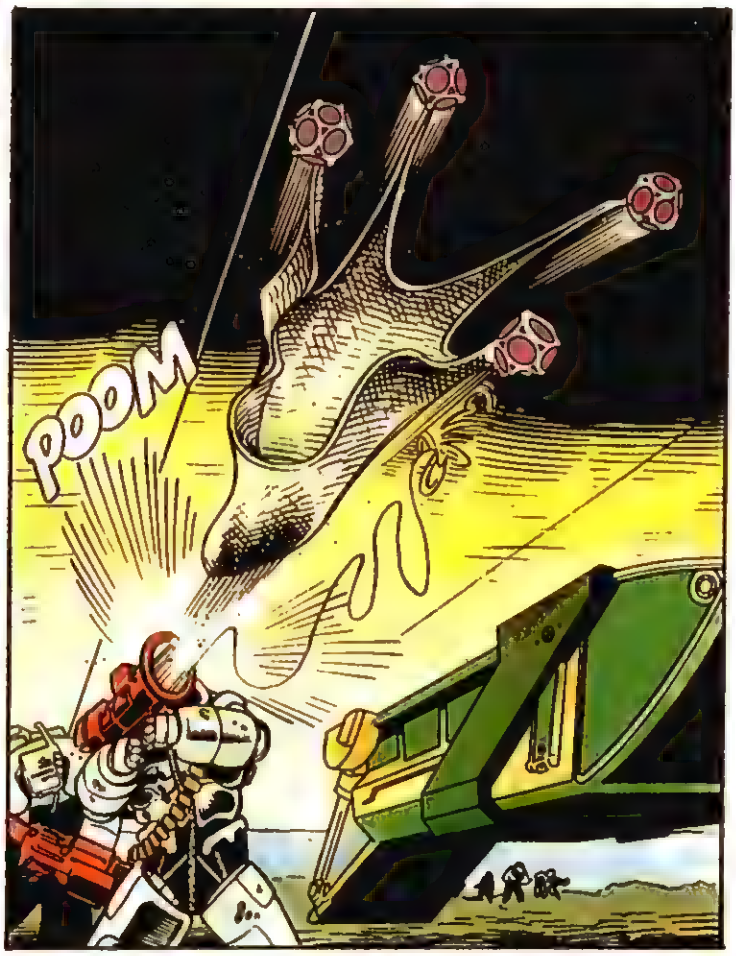
SHKOW!
SHKOW!

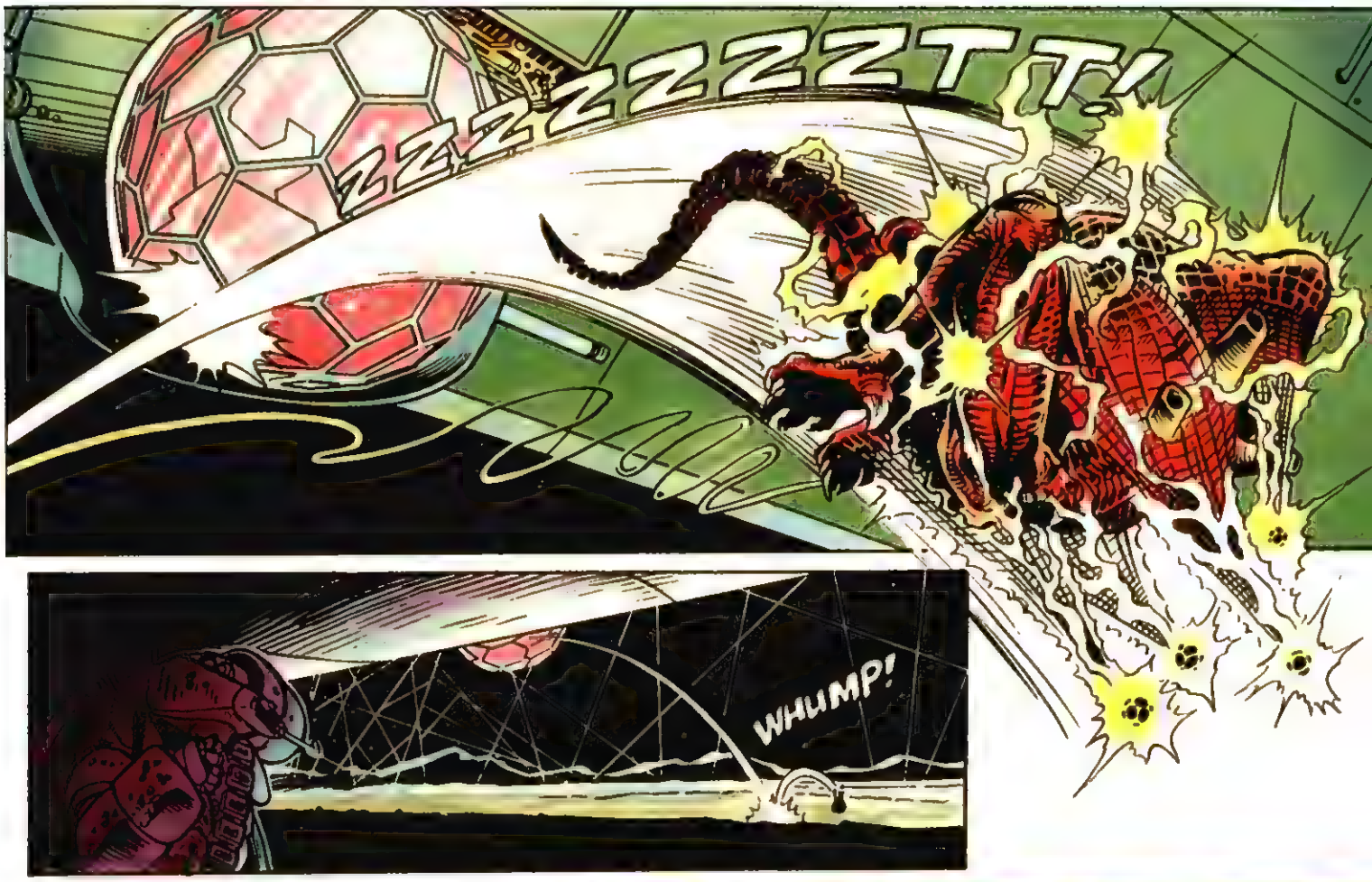

WOW, THAT ARMOR OF YOURS IS WORKING GREAT.
USED TO BE, YOU COULDN'T FIGHT THESE THINGS IN SUCH CLOSE QUARTERS.
MAN, LOOK AT HENRIKSEN GO!

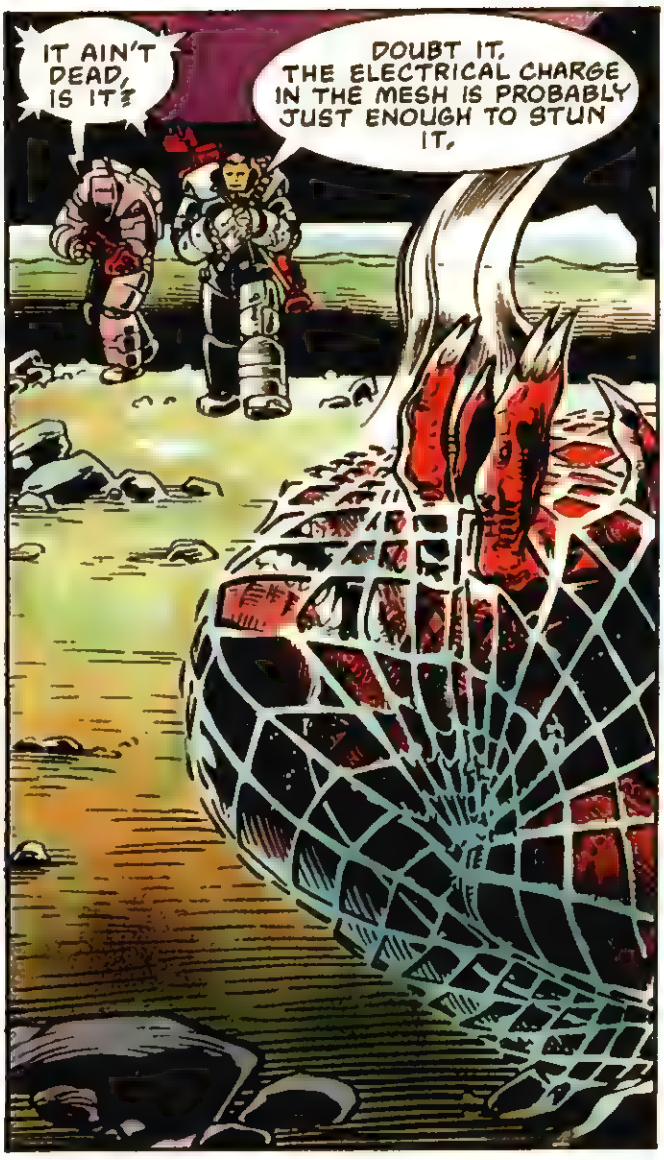
"HE'S A REGULAR ONE-MAN ARMY."


SCRITCH
SCRITCH
MAJOR, WE GOT ONE ON THE SHIP.


HOLD ON, SOLDIER. SHOOT HIM WITH THAT, WE'LL HAVE BUG BLOOD ALL OVER THE HULL.

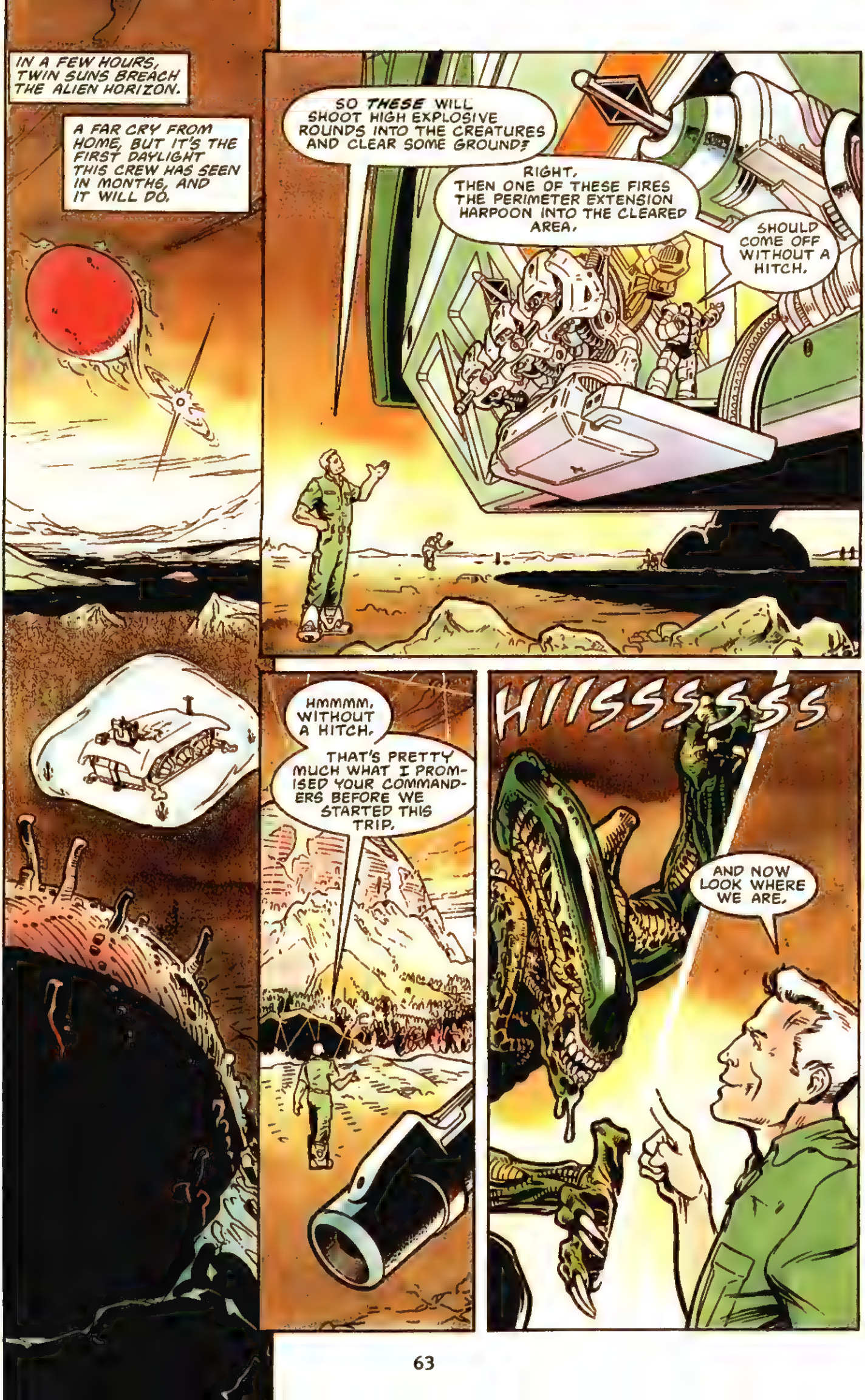

POOM


ZZZZZZZZTT!
WHUMP!

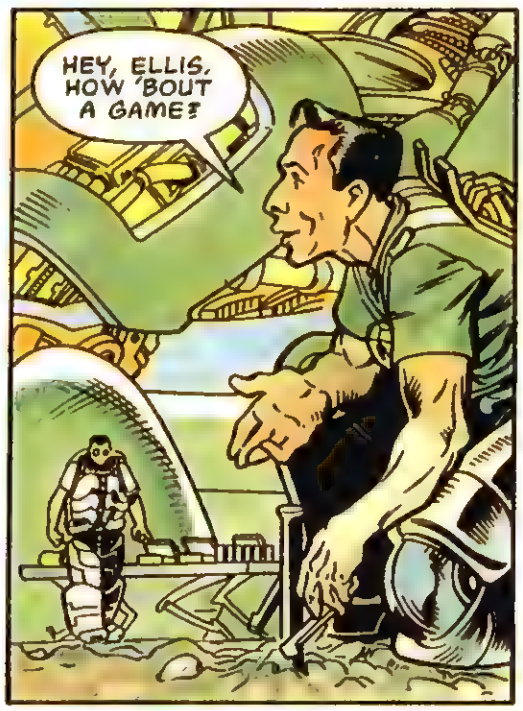

IT AIN'T DEAD, IS IT?
DOUBT IT. THE ELECTRICAL CHARGE IN THE MESH IS PROBABLY JUST ENOUGH TO STUN IT.

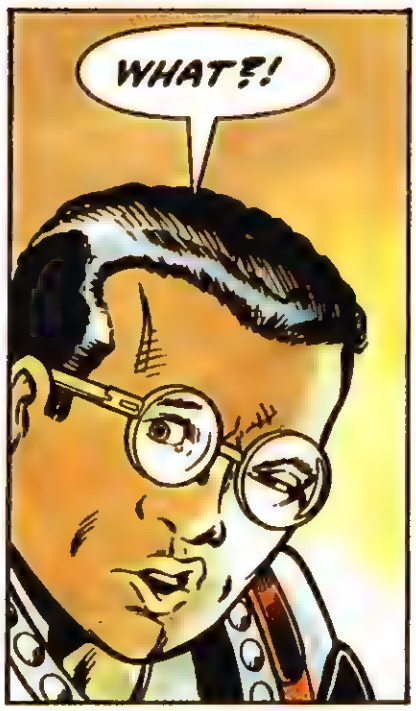
SSHHKON!

SORRY, MAJOR, BUT THIS IS A TAKE-NO-PRISONERS OPERATION.
ISN'T IT?
THAT WASN'T SO BAD. NOT TOO BAD AT ALL.
HELL, THIS OPERATION'S GONNA BE A CINCH!
YEAH...
RIGHT.

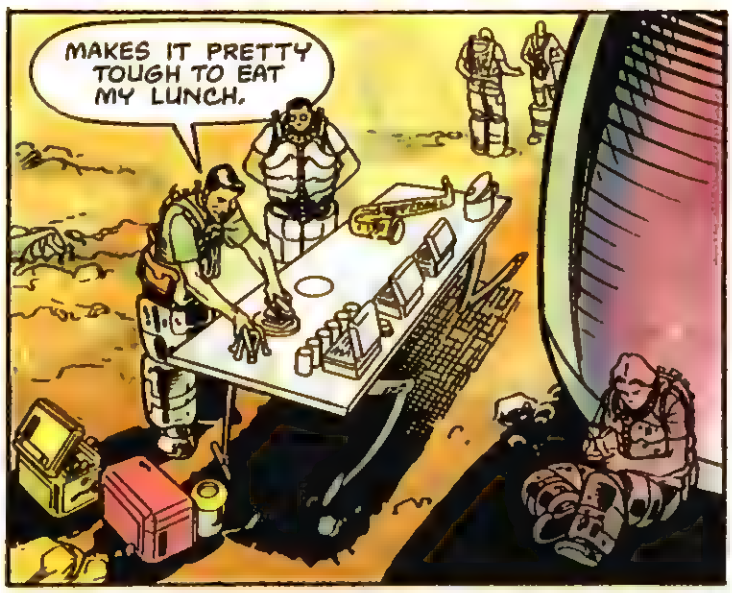

IN A FEW HOURS, TWIN SUNS BREACH THE ALIEN HORIZON.
A FAR CRY FROM HOME, BUT IT'S THE FIRST DAYLIGHT THIS CREW HAS SEEN IN MONTHS, AND IT WILL DO.
SO THESE WILL SHOOT HIGH EXPLOSIVE ROUNDS INTO THE CREATURES AND CLEAR SOME GROUND?
RIGHT. THEN ONE OF THESE FIRES THE PERIMETER EXTENSION HARPOON INTO THE CLEARED AREA.
SHOULD COME OFF WITHOUT A HITCH.
HMMMM. WITHOUT A HITCH.
THAT'S PRETTY MUCH WHAT I PROMISED YOUR COMMANDERS BEFORE WE STARTED THIS TRIP.
HISSSSSS
AND NOW LOOK WHERE WE ARE.

CLANG!


HEY, ELLIS, HOW 'BOUT A GAME?


WHAT?!

HOW THE HELL CAN YOU PLAY HORSESHOES WITH *THAT* JUST A FEW FEET AWAY?!
AHH, C'MON, YOU KNOW AS WELL AS I DO THEY CAN'T GET THROUGH THE OUTWALL.
MY ONLY COMPLAINT IS YOU CAN STILL SMELL 'EM.


MAKES IT PRETTY TOUGH TO EAT MY LUNCH.

NO, THEY CAN'T GET IN HERE, BUT PRETTY SOON, WE'RE GOING TO HAVE TO GO OUT *THERE!*
AND FROM THE LOOKS OF THINGS, I'D SAY THEY'RE READY FOR ONE HELL OF A FIGHT!

THAT'S ANOTHER THING, WHY ARE THEY BEATING ON EACH OTHER?

WHO CARES?

BACK ON EARTH, THEY'VE BEEN TRYING TO KILL US FOR MONTHS.

"PERSONALLY, I'M ENJOYING THE VIEW."

THAT CORPORAL HENRIKSEN IS ONE AMAZING SOLDIER.

I LIKE TO THINK ALL OF MY PEOPLE ARE, MR. GRANT.

I DIDN'T MEAN TO SLIGHT ANY OF YOUR TROOPS, MAJOR.

I JUST SINGLE HIM OUT BECAUSE OF WHAT I HEARD THE OTHER NIGHT.

HAH! YOU MEAN JASTROW'S COMMENTS ABOUT HIS BEING A SYNTH?

UH, NO. I MEANT WHAT HENRIKSEN SAID ABOUT BEING SENSITIVE TO THIS STUFF.

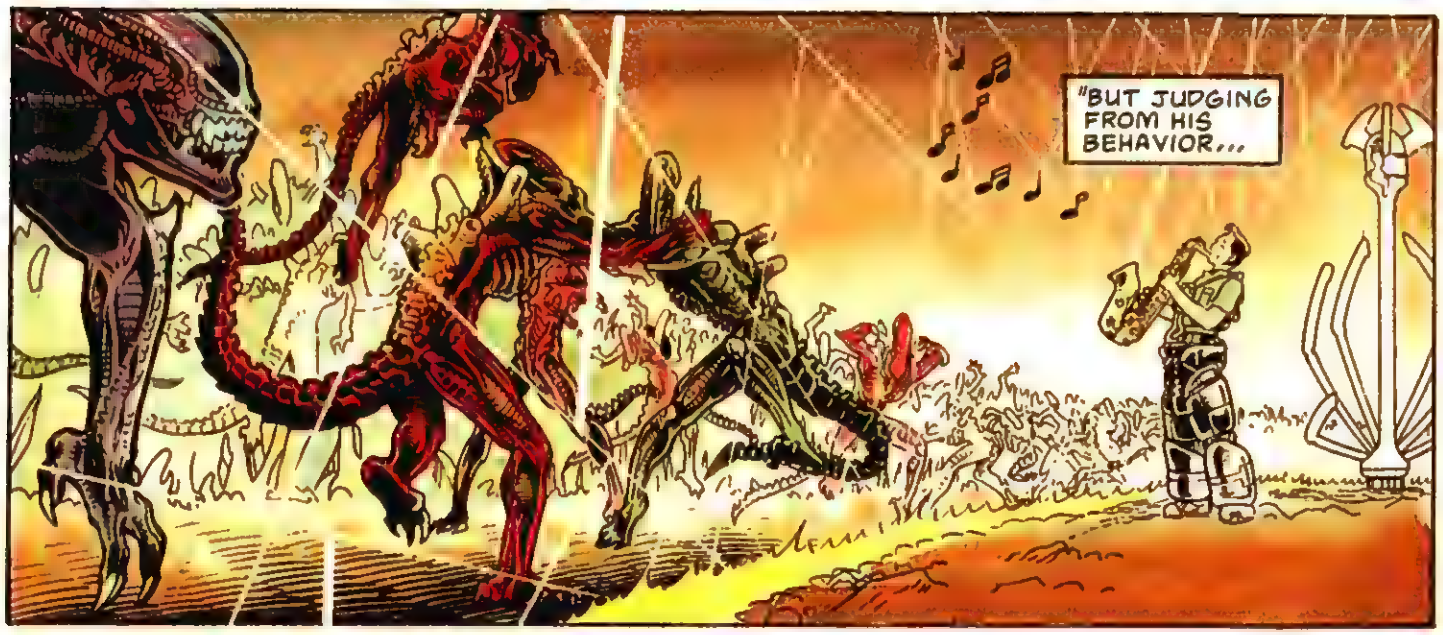
IT'S HARD TO IMAGINE HIM MORE FEROCIOUS THAN HE WAS THIS MORNING.

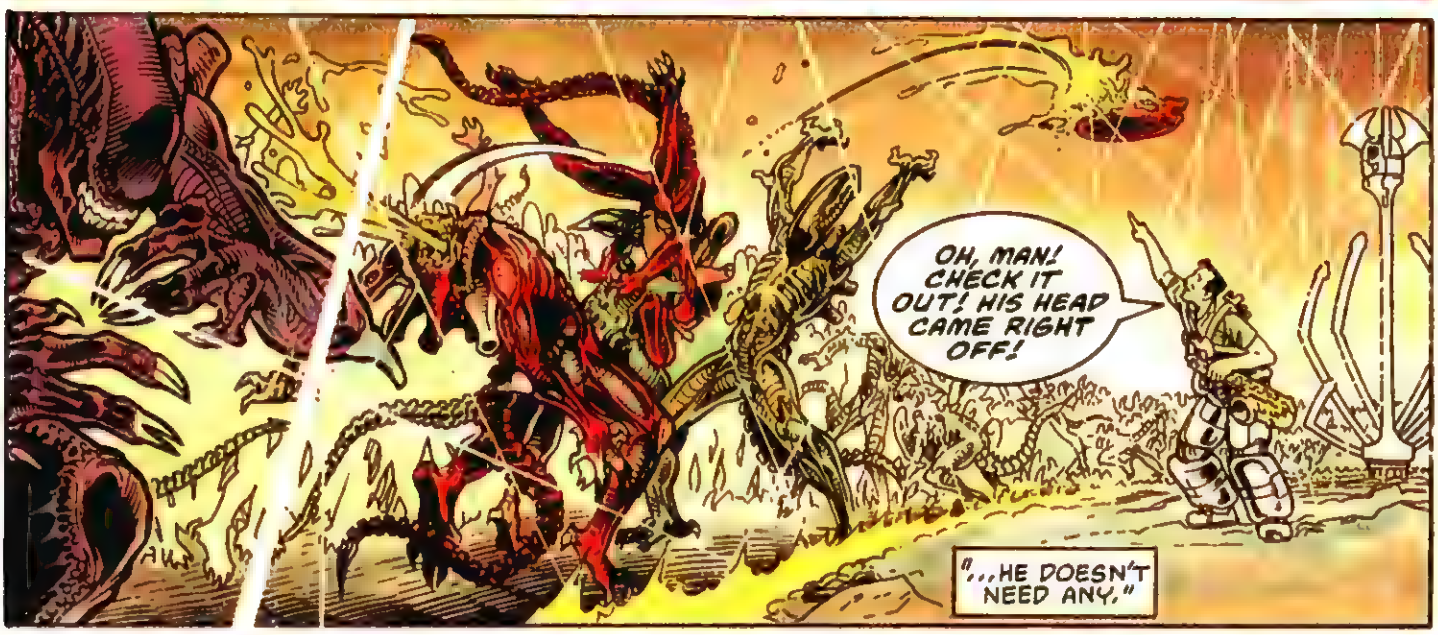
XENO ZIP

SO YOU DON'T THINK HENRIKSEN IS--

ISN'T THAT JASTROW'S XENO-ZIP?

HUH? OH YEAH. I MEANT TO GIVE IT BACK TO HIM.

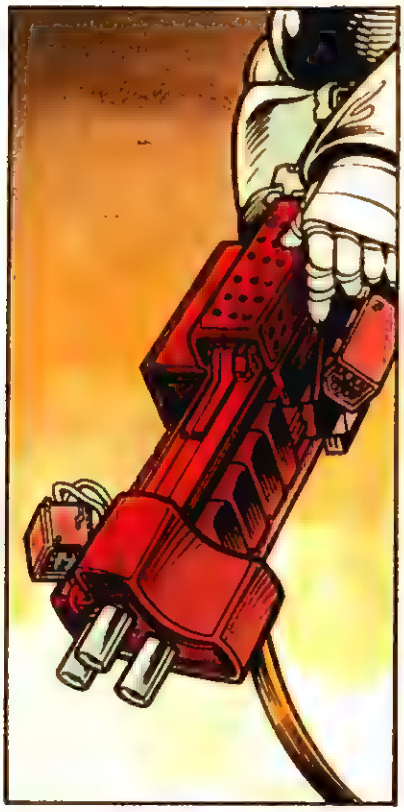

"BUT JUDGING FROM HIS BEHAVIOR...

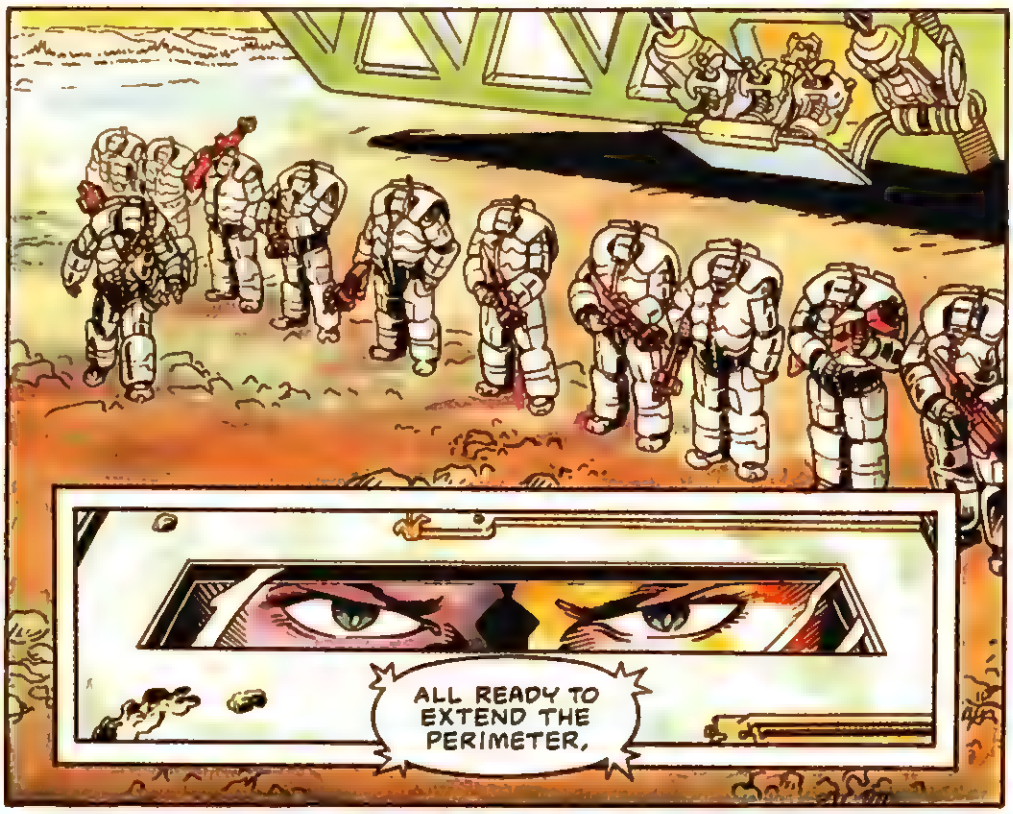

OH, MAN! CHECK IT OUT! HIS HEAD CAME RIGHT OFF!
"...HE DOESN'T NEED ANY."

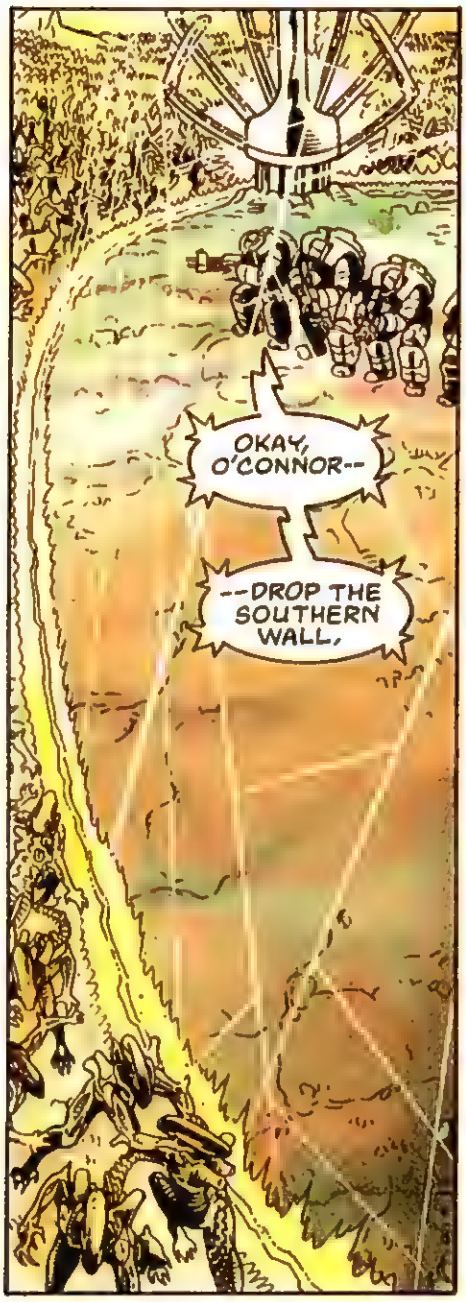
IT'S ALL RATHER PUZZLING.

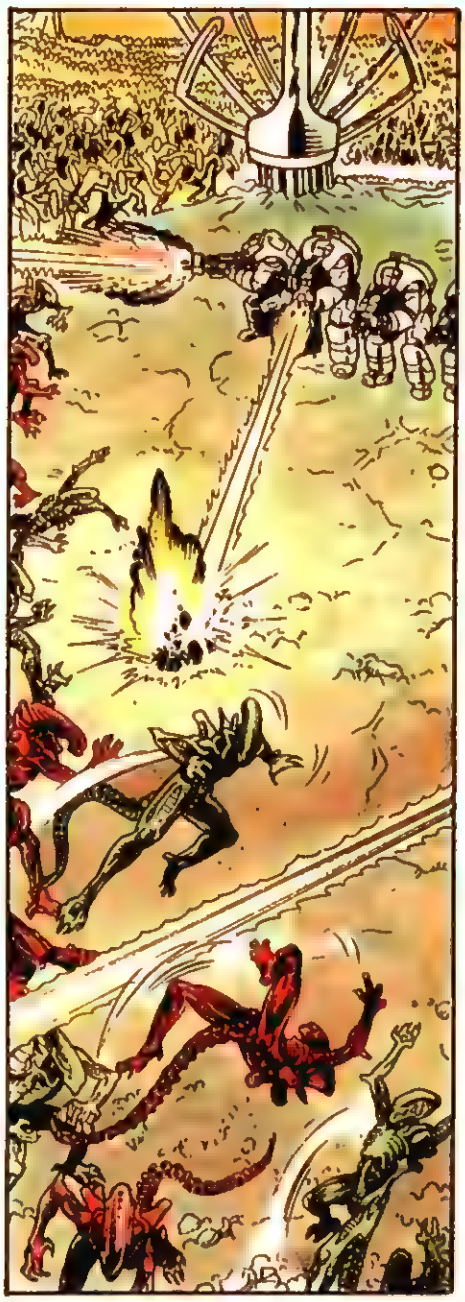
PERHAPS THEY'RE EXECUTING SOME SORT OF POPULATION CONTROL, LIKE LEMMINGS MARCHING INTO THE SEA.

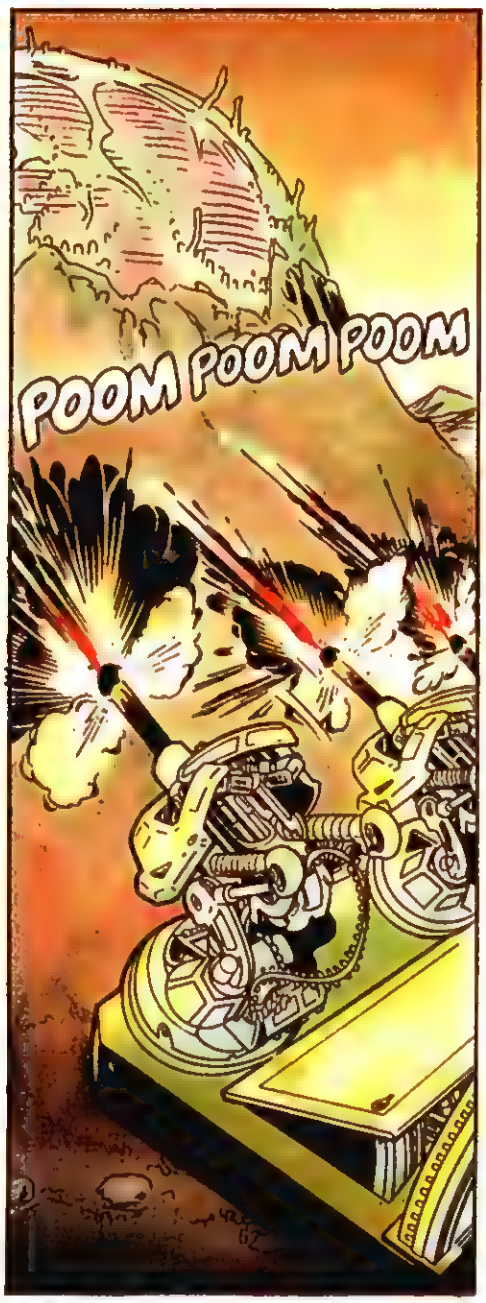
I'M GOING OUT TO STUDY THIS PHENOMENON MORE CLOSELY.
YOU'RE GONNA HAVE TO HOLD OFF ON THAT, DR. BEGALLI.
I JUST GOT THE WORD.

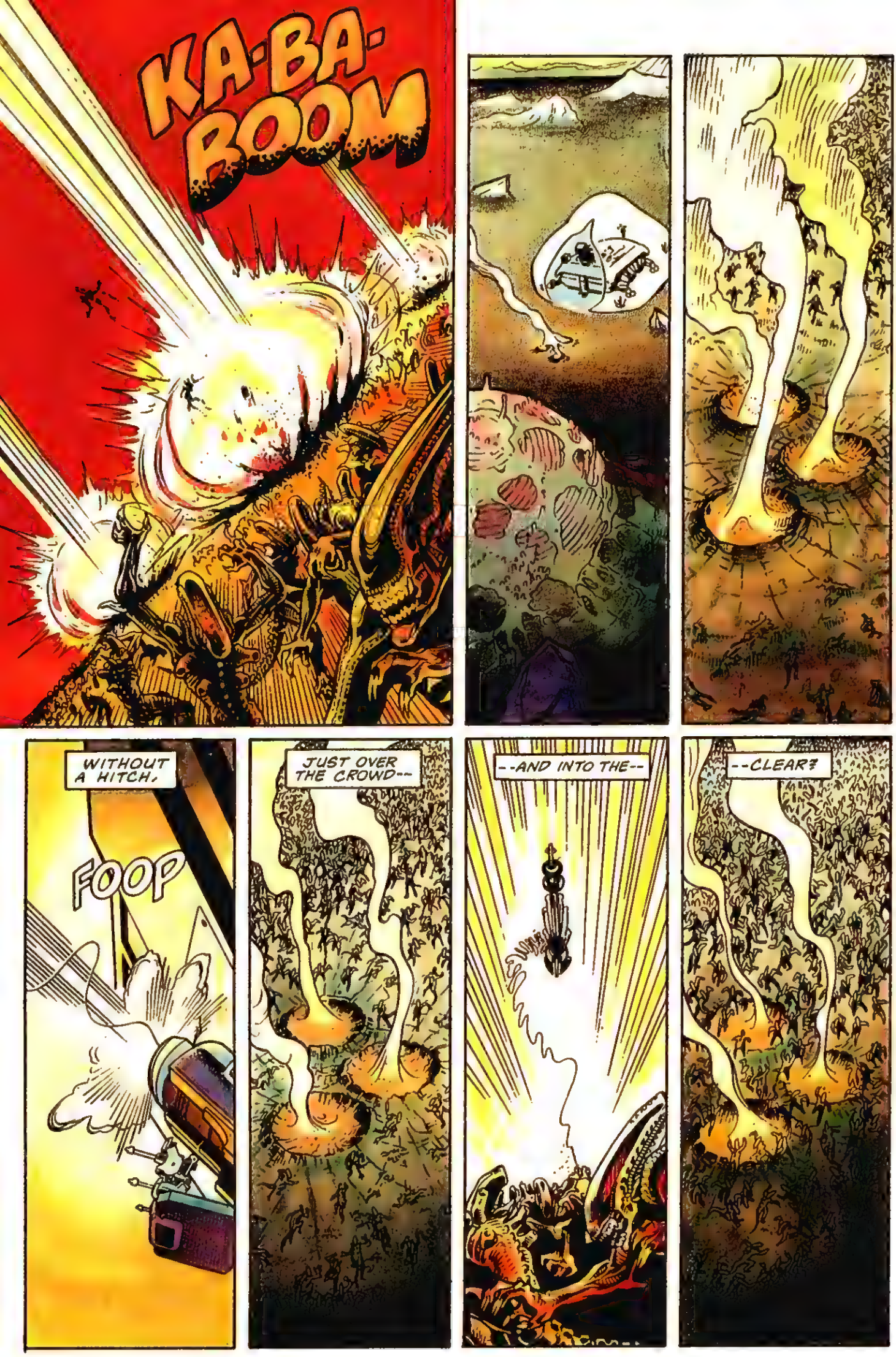



ALL READY TO EXTEND THE PERIMETER,


OKAY, O'CONNOR--
--DROP THE SOUTHERN WALL,



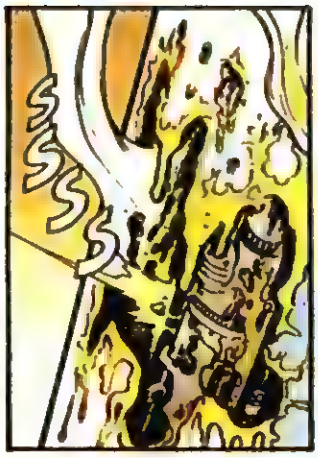

POOM POOM POOM

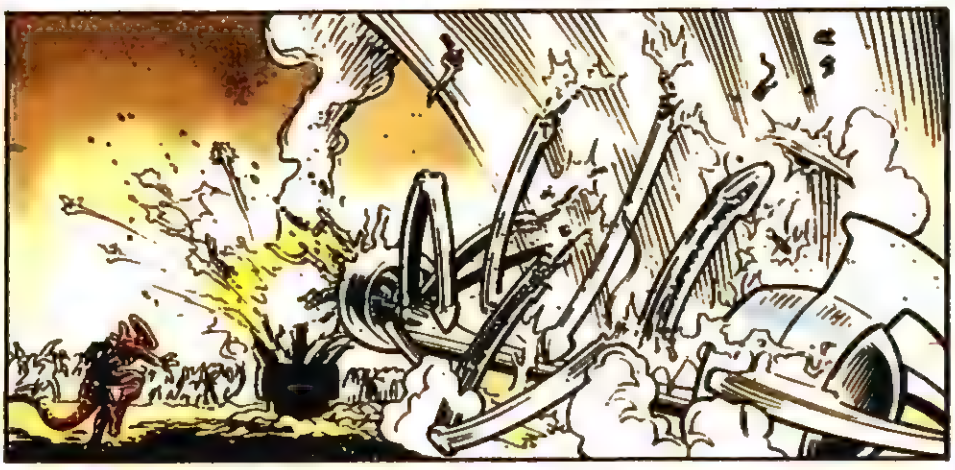

KA-BA-BOOM
WITHOUT A HITCH.
FOOP
JUST OVER THE CROWD--
--AND INTO THE--
--CLEAR?

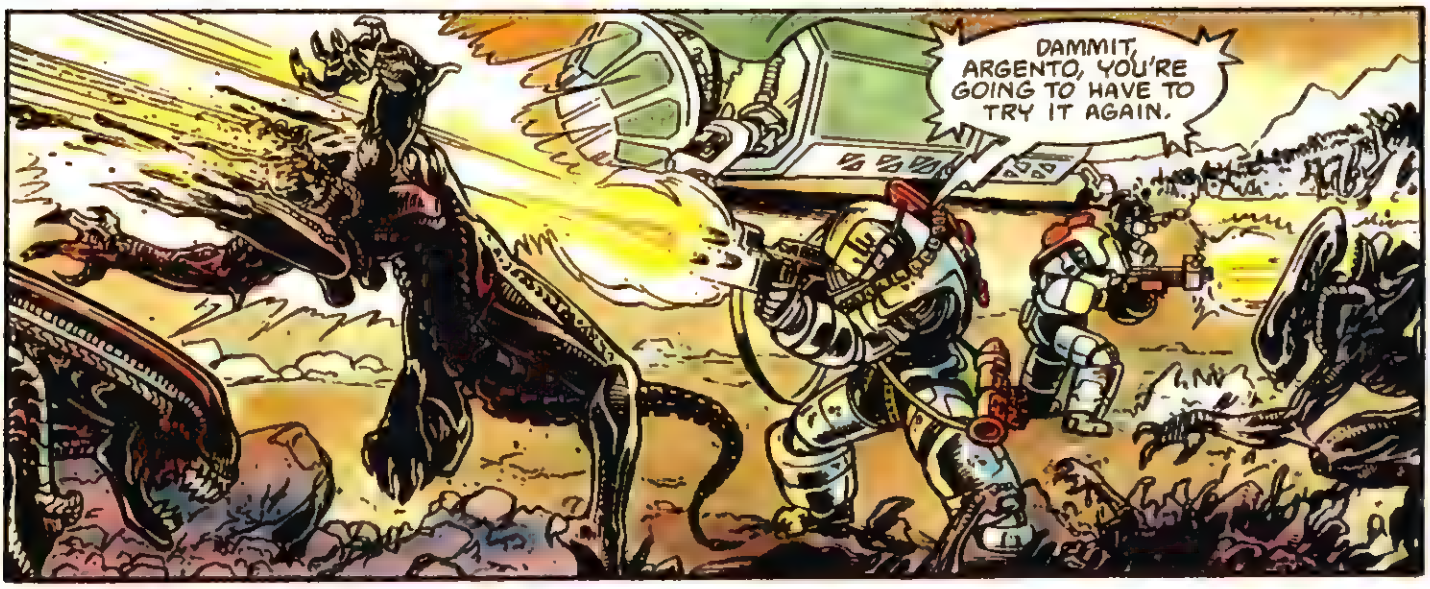
SPLUTCH

SSSSS

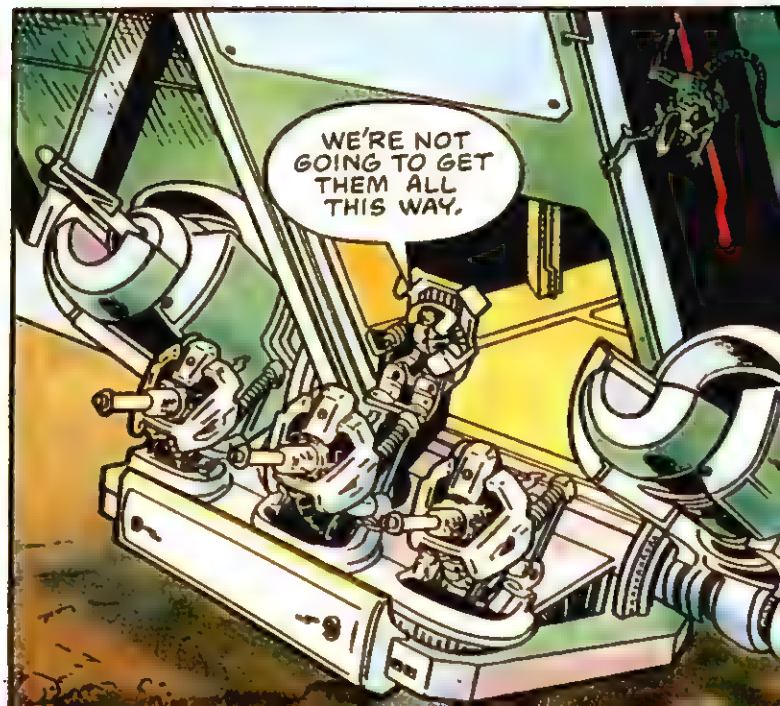
SSSS

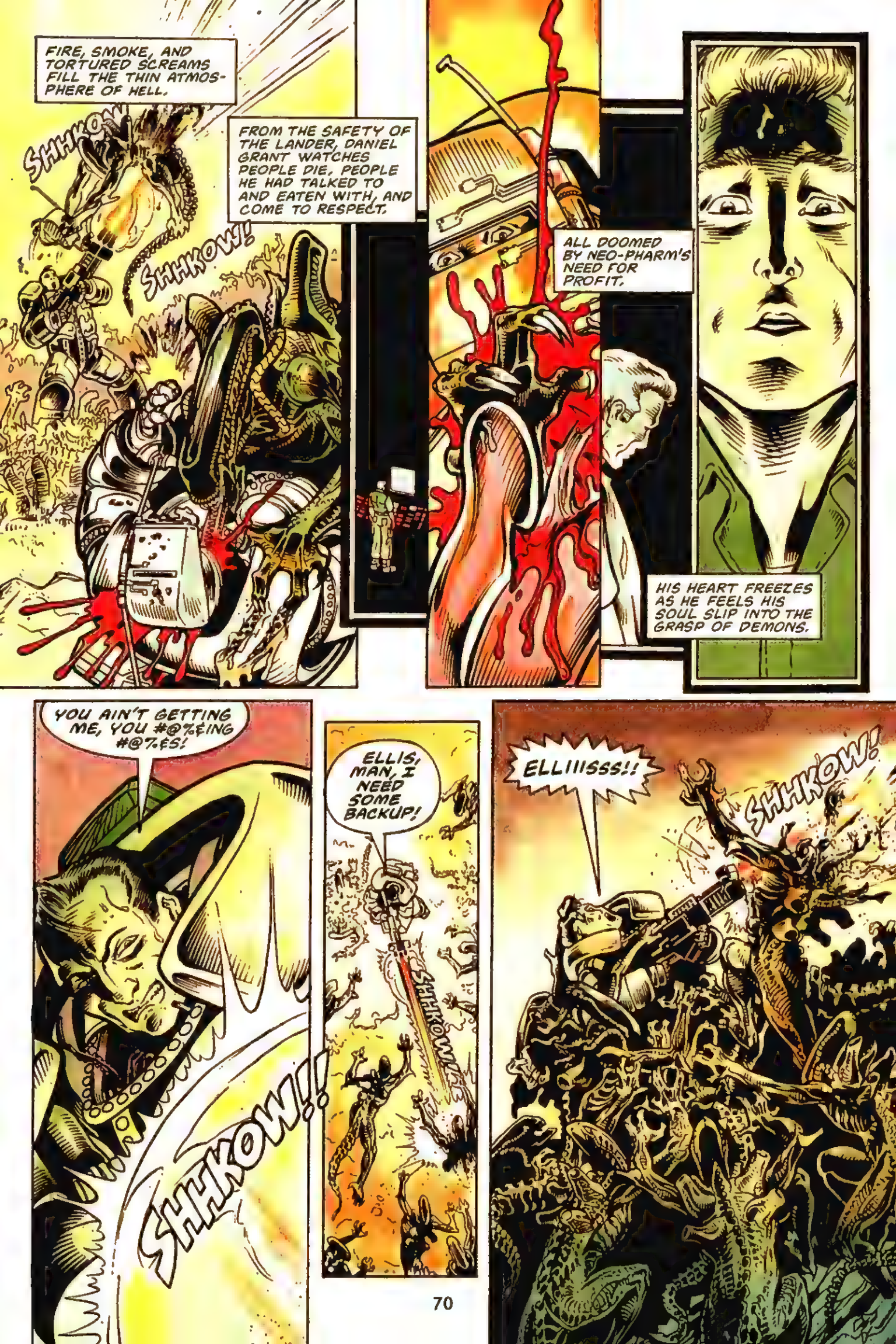

SSS




DAMMIT, ARGENTO, YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE TO TRY IT AGAIN.

YOU GOT IT, MAJOR, BUT I THINK WE SHOULD TRY ANOTHER TACTIC. THIS IS TOUGHER THAN WE FIGURED.
IT'S LIKE TRYING TO EMPTY A RIVER WITH A BUCKET.

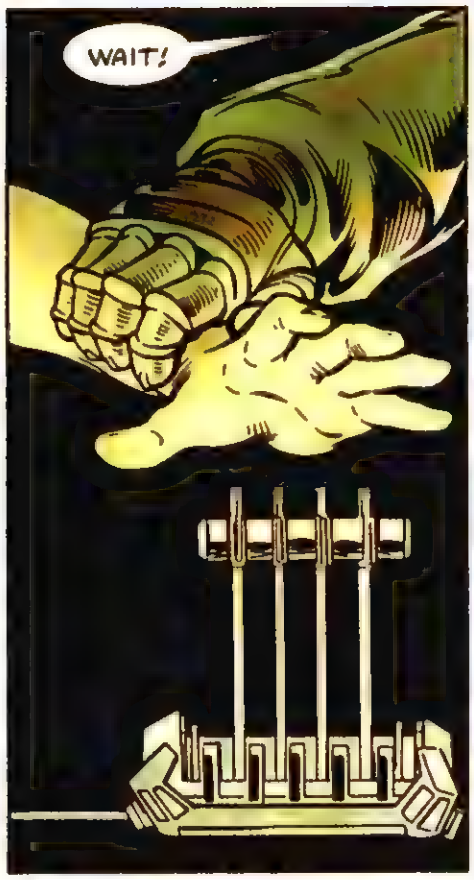

WE'RE NOT GOING TO GET THEM ALL THIS WAY.


FIRE, SMOKE, AND TORTURED SCREAMS FILL THE THIN ATMOSPHERE OF HELL.
SHHKOW
FROM THE SAFETY OF THE LANDER, DANIEL GRANT WATCHES PEOPLE DIE, PEOPLE HE HAD TALKED TO AND EATEN WITH, AND COME TO RESPECT.
SHHKOW!
ALL DOOMED BY NEO-PHARM'S NEED FOR PROFIT.
HIS HEART FREEZES AS HE FEELS HIS SOUL SLIP INTO THE GRASP OF DEMONS.
YOU AIN'T GETTING ME, YOU #@%$ING #@%$ES!
SHHKOW!!
ELLIS, MAN, I NEED SOME BACKUP!
SHHKOW!
ELLIIISSS!!
SHHKOW!

ARGENTO, SCREW THE PERIMETER.
FIRE THE MORTARS INTO THEIR FRONT LINES.
FORGET ABOUT ARGENTO, MAJOR.

"HIS FIGHTING DAYS ARE OVER."

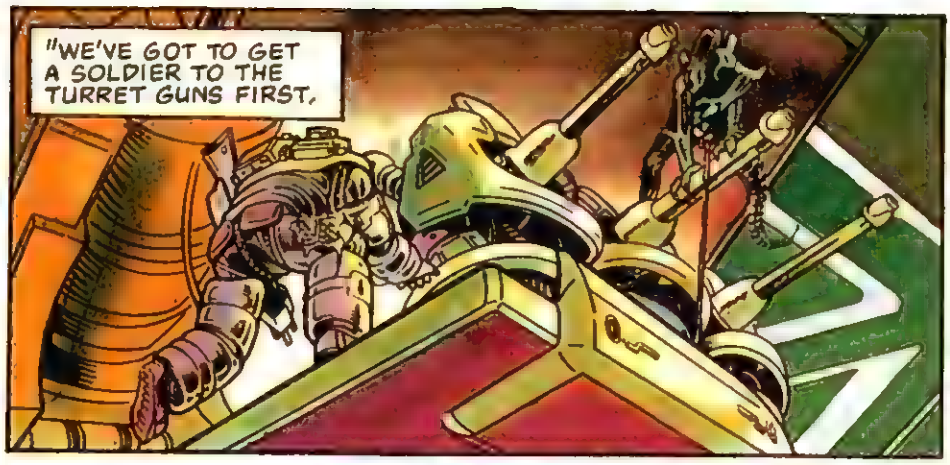
O'CONNOR, REACTIVATE THE SOUTHERN WALL, A.S.A.P.!
WILL DO, MAJOR.

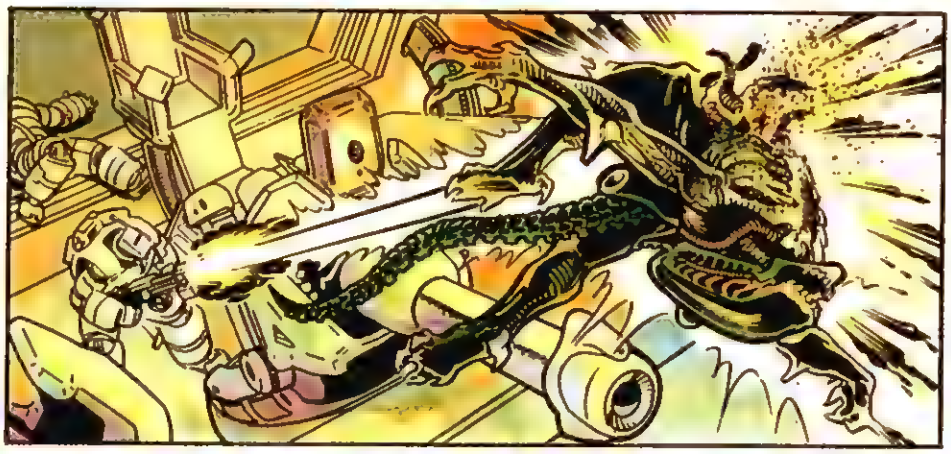

WAIT!

WAIT FOR WHAT, YOU MAGGOT?

FOR A FEW MORE OF THEM TO GET KILLED?

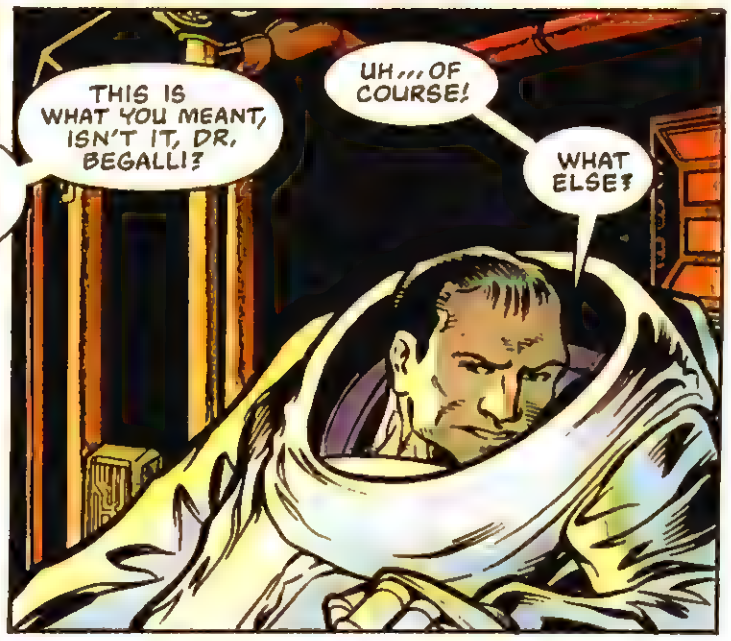
GO AHEAD, O'CONNOR, I'LL TAKE CARE OF THIS TURD.
NO, MR. GRANT. HE'S RIGHT.


"WE'VE GOT TO GET A SOLDIER TO THE TURRET GUNS FIRST.



KABABOOM
"ONLY THEY CAN PROVIDE THE NECESSARY FIREPOWER TO DRIVE BACK THE BULK OF THE CREATURES."

IF I'D THROWN UP THE BARRIER, THE BLAST WOULD HAVE BEEN CONTAINED--
--RESULTING IN SEVERE DAMAGE TO THE LANDER.


THIS IS WHAT YOU MEANT, ISN'T IT, DR. BEGALI?
UH... OF COURSE!
WHAT ELSE?

IN A MATTER OF MINUTES, THE CREATURES ARE REPELLED, THE PERIMETER'S SOUTHERN WALL IS SECURED.

AND FIVE MARINES ARE DEAD.

JESUS...

THIS IS SOME BUSINESS YOU'RE IN, GRANT.

TELL ME, HOW DO YOU FIGURE THE DEATHS OF FIVE MARINES INTO YOUR OVER-HEAD?

MAJOR, PLEASE...

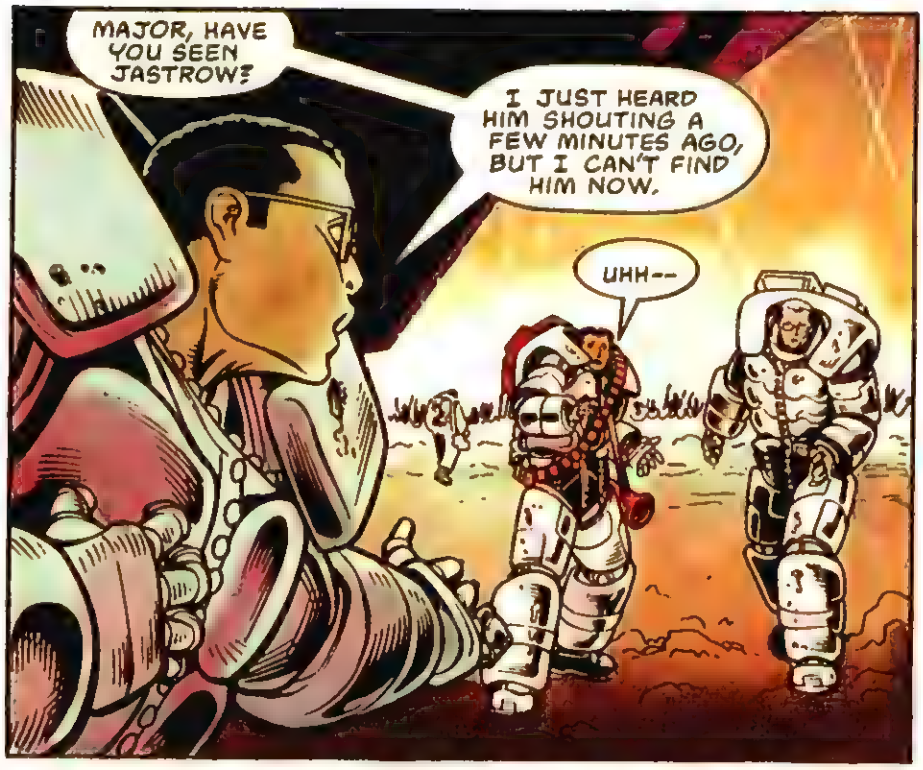
I...I... JUST DIDN'T KNOW.

THAT MAKES TWO OF YOU, DOESN'T IT, DOCTOR?

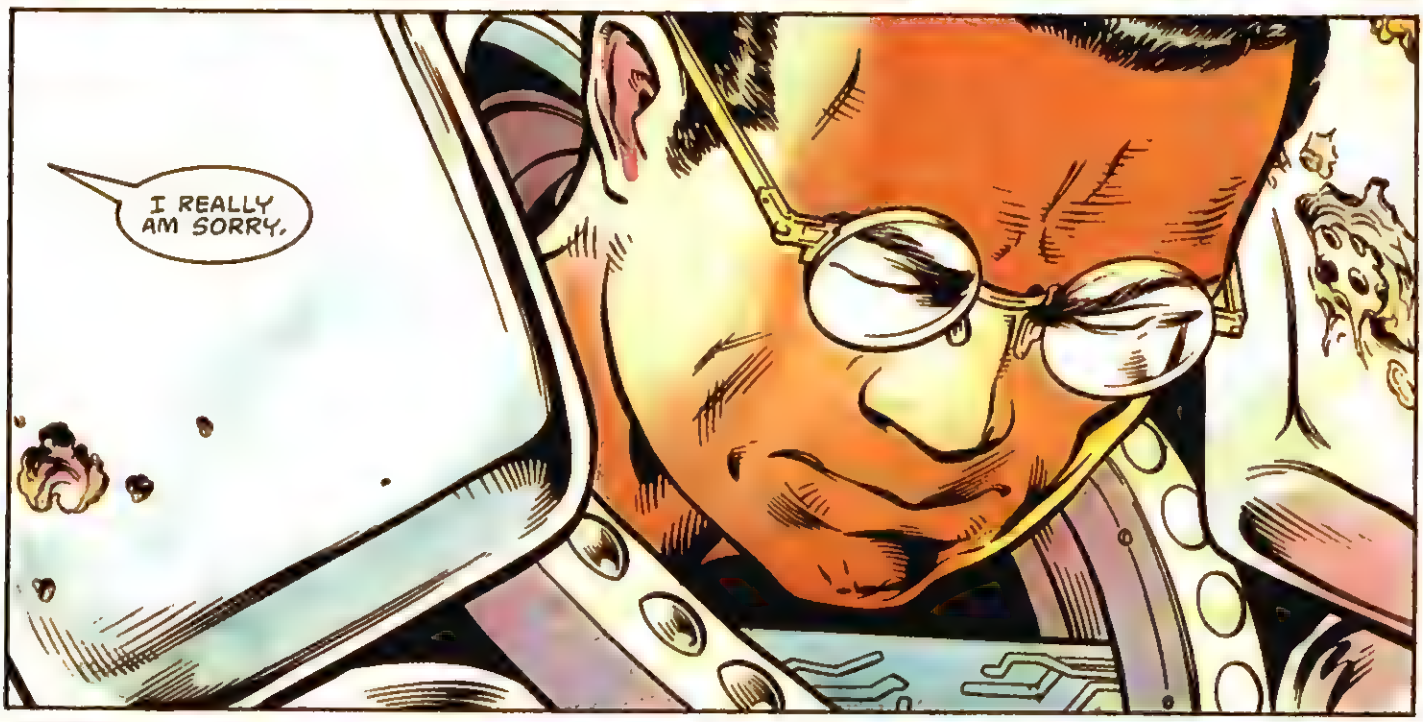
DIDN'T YOU AND YOUR PALS SAY THESE CRICKETS WOULD BE HIBERNATING?

WELL, I'M AS SURPRISED AS YOU ARE, MAJOR.

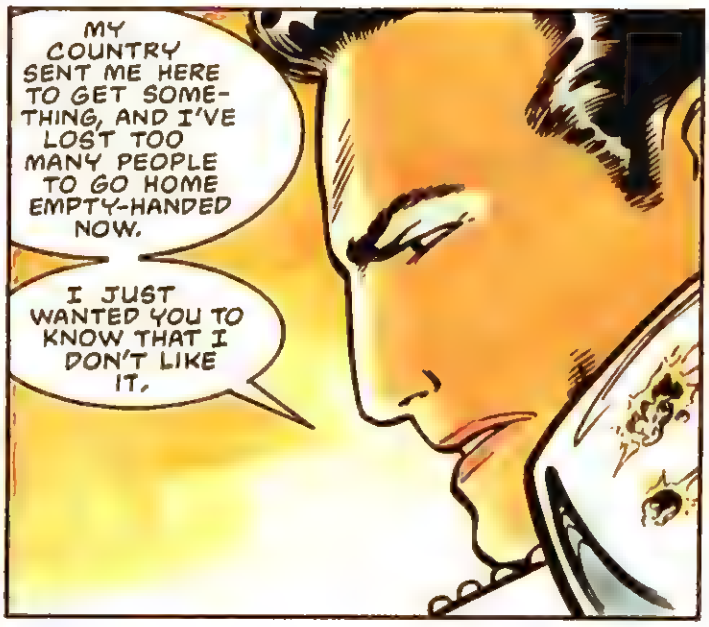
I'LL SEE WHAT I CAN MAKE OF ALL THIS, IF YOU'LL EXCUSE ME.

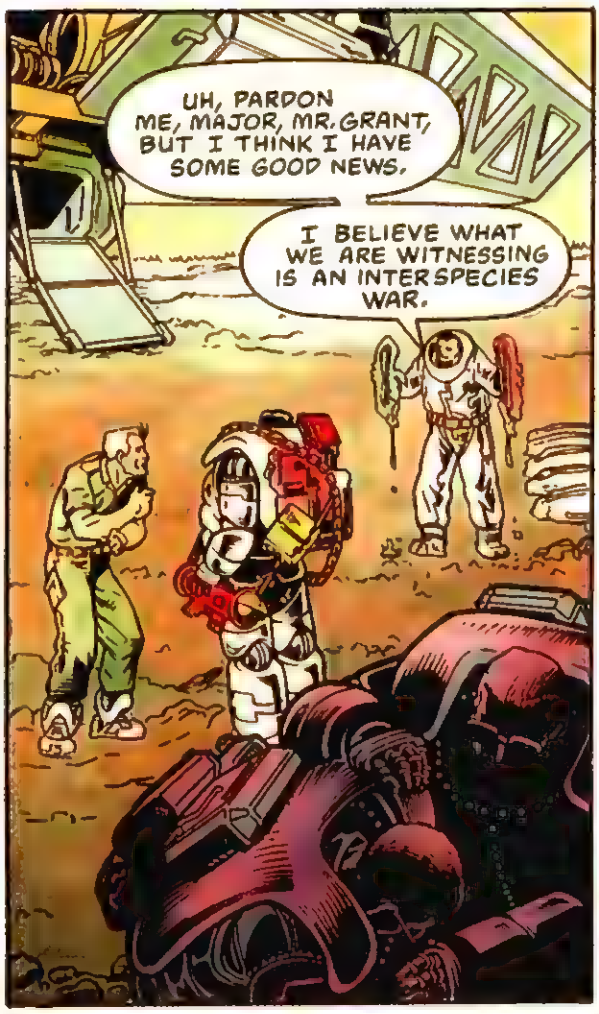

MAJOR, HAVE YOU SEEN JASTROW?
I JUST HEARD HIM SHOUTING A FEW MINUTES AGO, BUT I CAN'T FIND HIM NOW.
UHH--

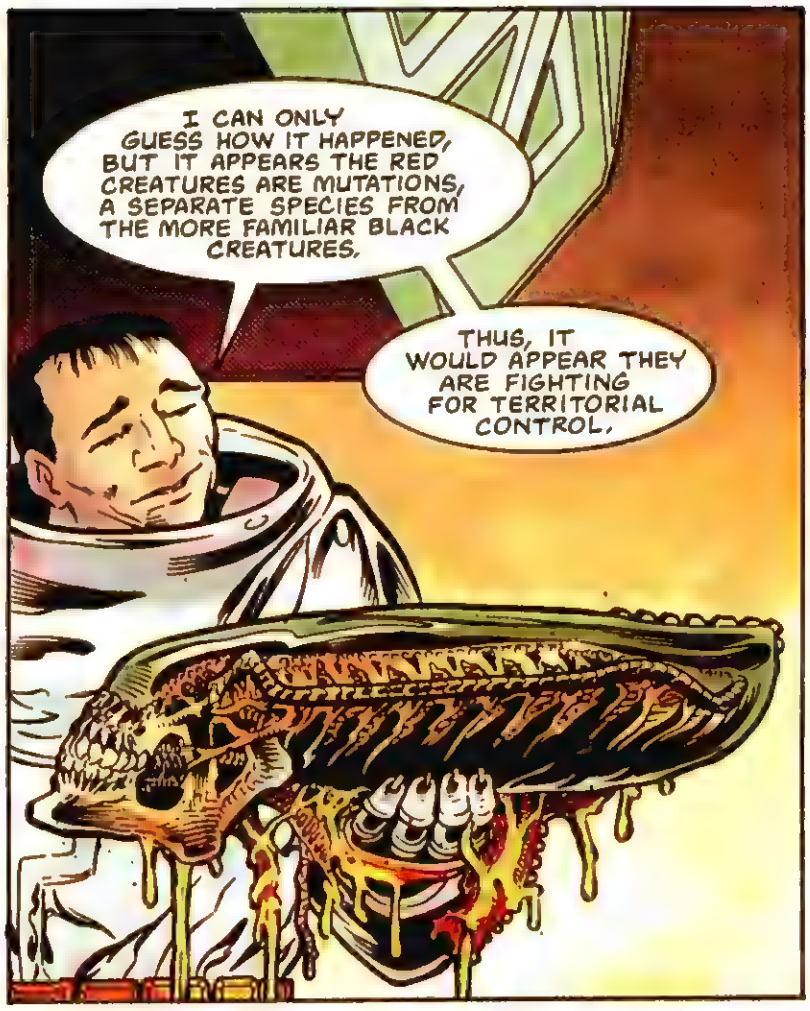
I'M... SORRY, ELLIS.
THERE WAS NOTHING ANYBODY COULD DO.


I REALLY AM SORRY.

I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO SAY.
MAYBE YOU WANT TO QUIT--
WRONG! MARINES DON'T QUIT, MISTER.


MY COUNTRY SENT ME HERE TO GET SOMETHING, AND I'VE LOST TOO MANY PEOPLE TO GO HOME EMPTY-HANDED NOW.
I JUST WANTED YOU TO KNOW THAT I DON'T LIKE IT.


UH, PARDON ME, MAJOR, MR. GRANT, BUT I THINK I HAVE SOME GOOD NEWS.
I BELIEVE WHAT WE ARE WITNESSING IS AN INTERSPECIES WAR.

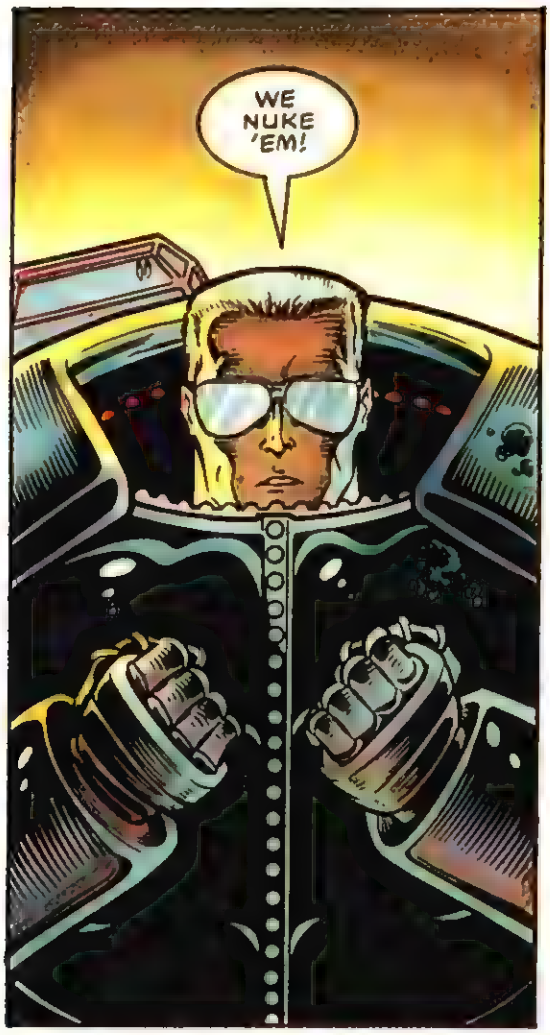

I CAN ONLY GUESS HOW IT HAPPENED, BUT IT APPEARS THE RED CREATURES ARE MUTATIONS, A SEPARATE SPECIES FROM THE MORE FAMILIAR BLACK CREATURES.
THUS, IT WOULD APPEAR THEY ARE FIGHTING FOR TERRITORIAL CONTROL.

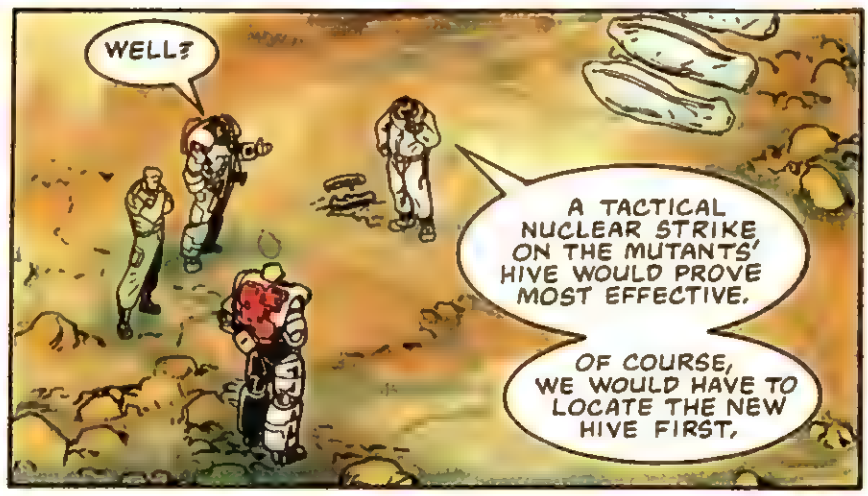
YOU MEAN LIKE ANTS?!
PRECISELY.
SO WHY IS THAT GOOD NEWS?

WELL, IF WE COULD SWAY THE BATTLE IN FAVOR OF ONE SIDE, THERE WOULD VERY LIKELY BE A ROUT.
LEAVING THIS HIVE RELATIVELY CLEAR AND UNPROTECTED.

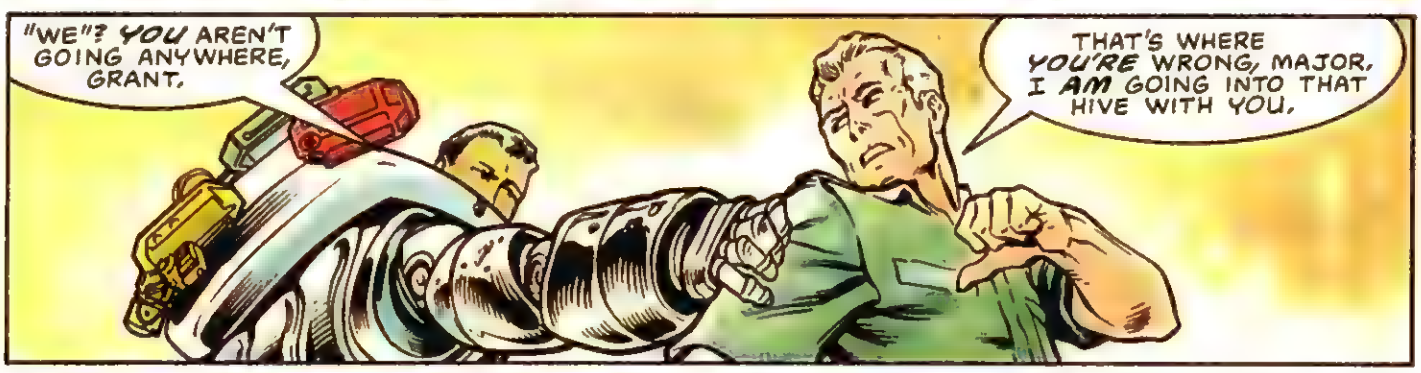
BUT THAT TURRET CARRIES OUR BEST FIREPOWER, AND IT DIDN'T DO A THING.
HOW CAN WE SWAY THE BATTLE?

EASY, MR. GRANT.


WE NUKE 'EM!

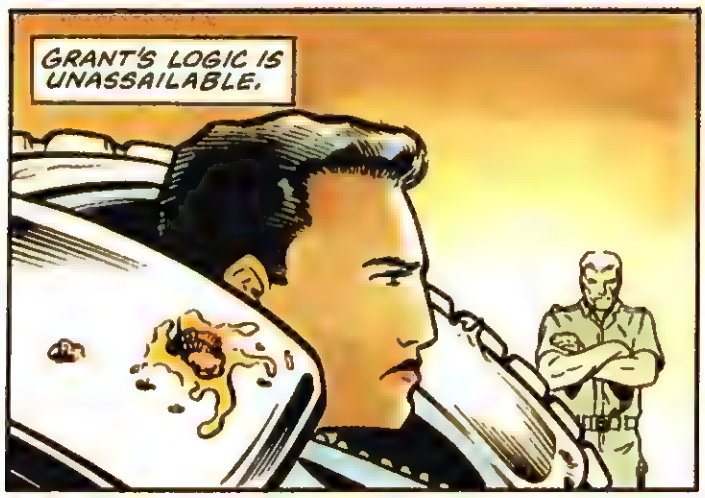

WELL?
A TACTICAL NUCLEAR STRIKE ON THE MUTANTS' HIVE WOULD PROVE MOST EFFECTIVE.
OF COURSE, WE WOULD HAVE TO LOCATE THE NEW HIVE FIRST.

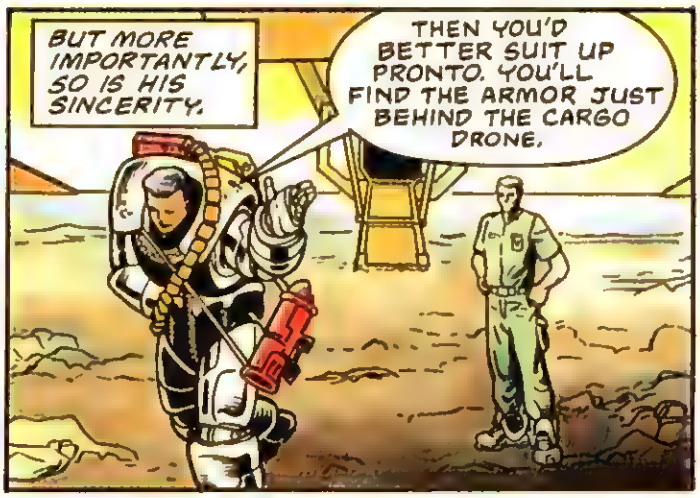
THAT SHOULDN'T BE A PROBLEM. I'LL BUZZ THE ORBITER TO GET ON IT RIGHT AWAY.
GOOD. THE SOONER WE GO IN, THE SOONER WE CAN END THIS.

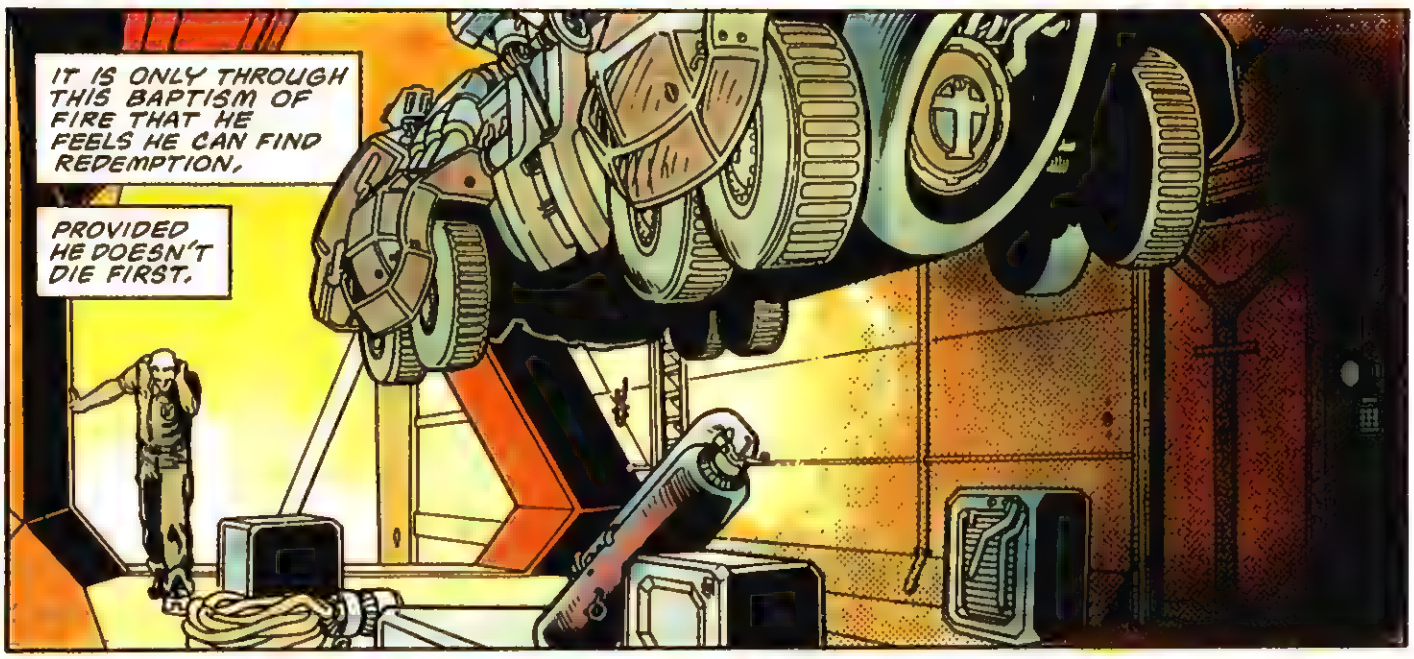

"WE"? YOU AREN'T GOING ANYWHERE, GRANT.
THAT'S WHERE YOU'RE WRONG, MAJOR. I AM GOING INTO THAT HIVE WITH YOU.

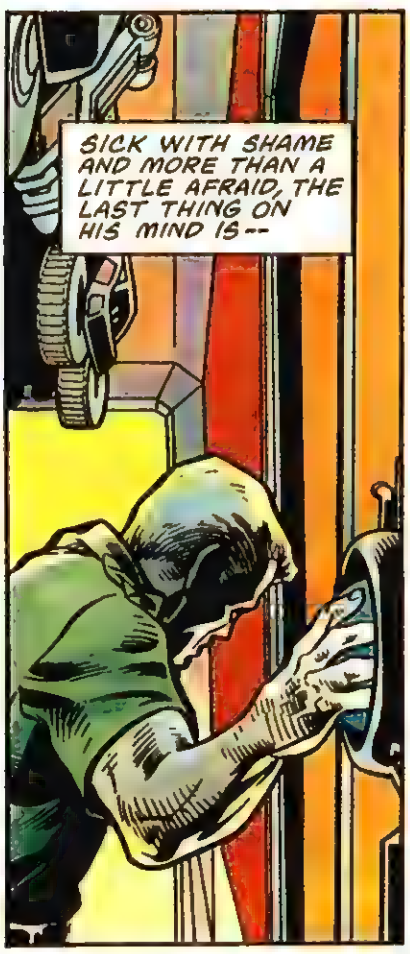
I DON'T WANT ANY CIVILIANS--
SAVE IT, MAJOR!
ON A PRACTICAL LEVEL, YOU NEED MANPOWER BADLY.

AND ON A MORAL LEVEL, I NEED TO DO THIS.
CAN YOU UNDERSTAND THAT, MAJOR? IF I'M EVER TO LOOK MYSELF IN THE MIRROR AGAIN, I NEED TO DO THIS.


GRANT'S LOGIC IS UNASSAILABLE.

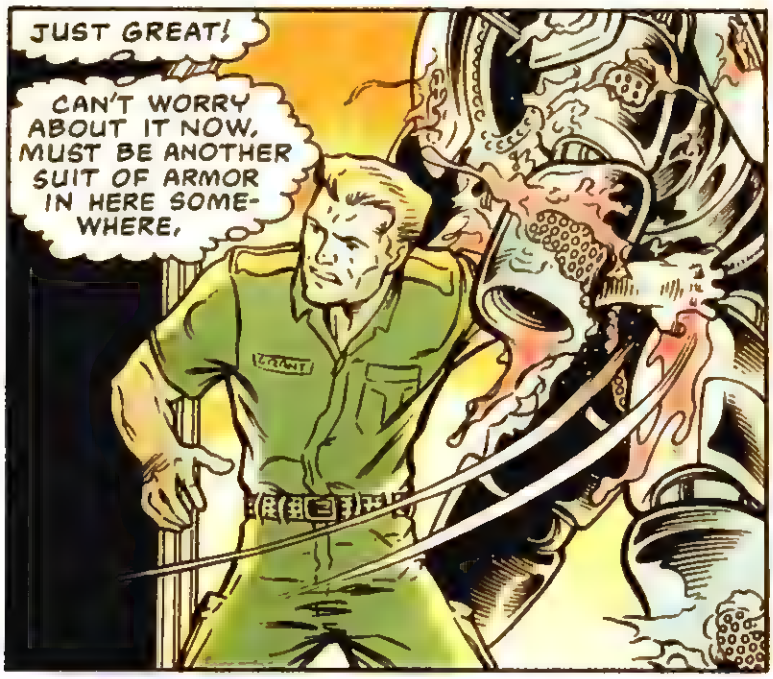

BUT MORE IMPORTANTLY, SO IS HIS SINCERITY.
THEN YOU'D BETTER SUIT UP PRONTO. YOU'LL FIND THE ARMOR JUST BEHIND THE CARGO DRONE.


IT IS ONLY THROUGH THIS BAPTISM OF FIRE THAT HE FEELS HE CAN FIND REDEMPTION,
PROVIDED HE DOESN'T DIE FIRST.

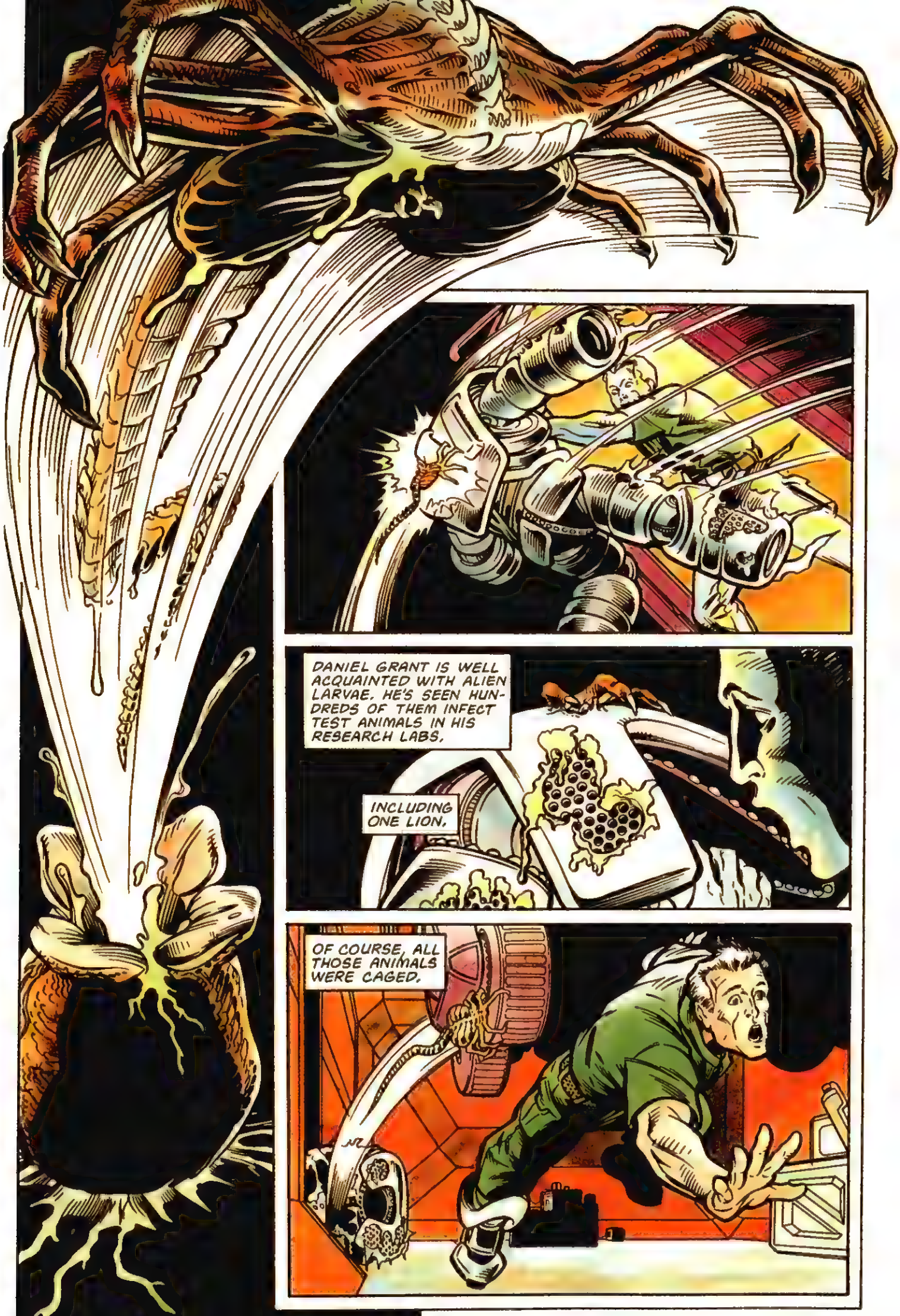

SICK WITH SHAME AND MORE THAN A LITTLE AFRAID, THE LAST THING ON HIS MIND IS--

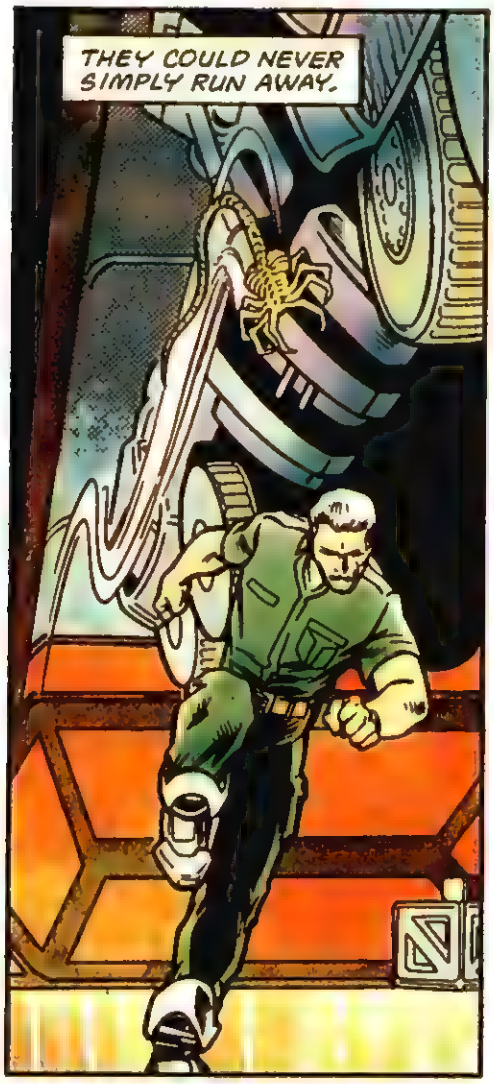
vvvip

--SABOTAGE.


JUST GREAT!
CAN'T WORRY ABOUT IT NOW. MUST BE ANOTHER SUIT OF ARMOR IN HERE SOMEWHERE.

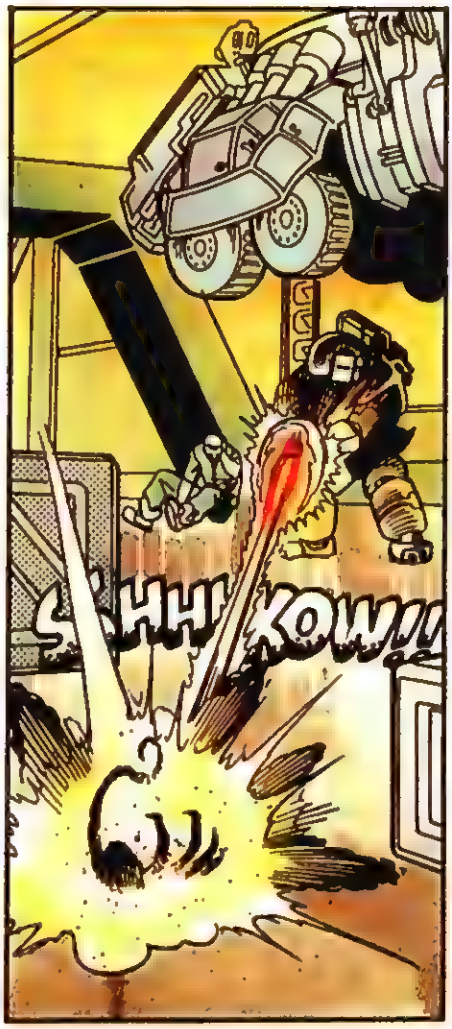
SCREEEE


DANIEL GRANT IS WELL ACQUAINTED WITH ALIEN LARVAE. HE'S SEEN HUNDREDS OF THEM INFECT TEST ANIMALS IN HIS RESEARCH LABS.
INCLUDING ONE LION.
OF COURSE, ALL THOSE ANIMALS WERE CAGED.


THEY COULD NEVER SIMPLY RUN AWAY.

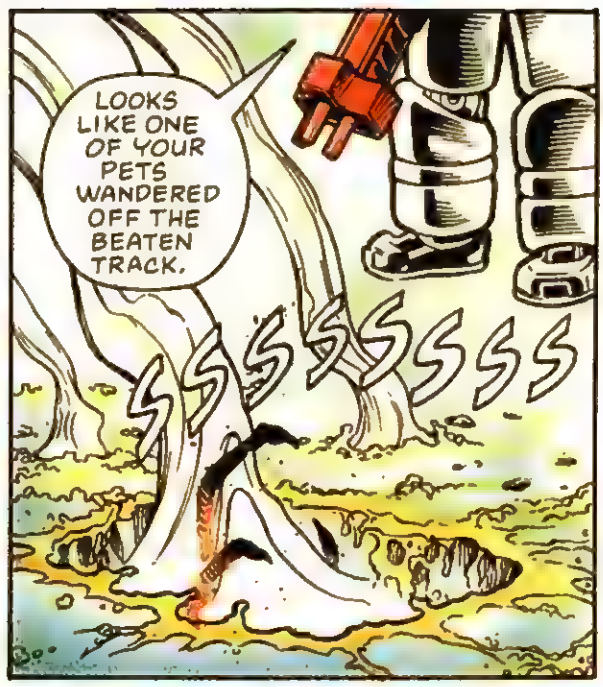
NOT THAT IT WOULD HAVE DONE THEM ANY GOOD.
HAAALP!!

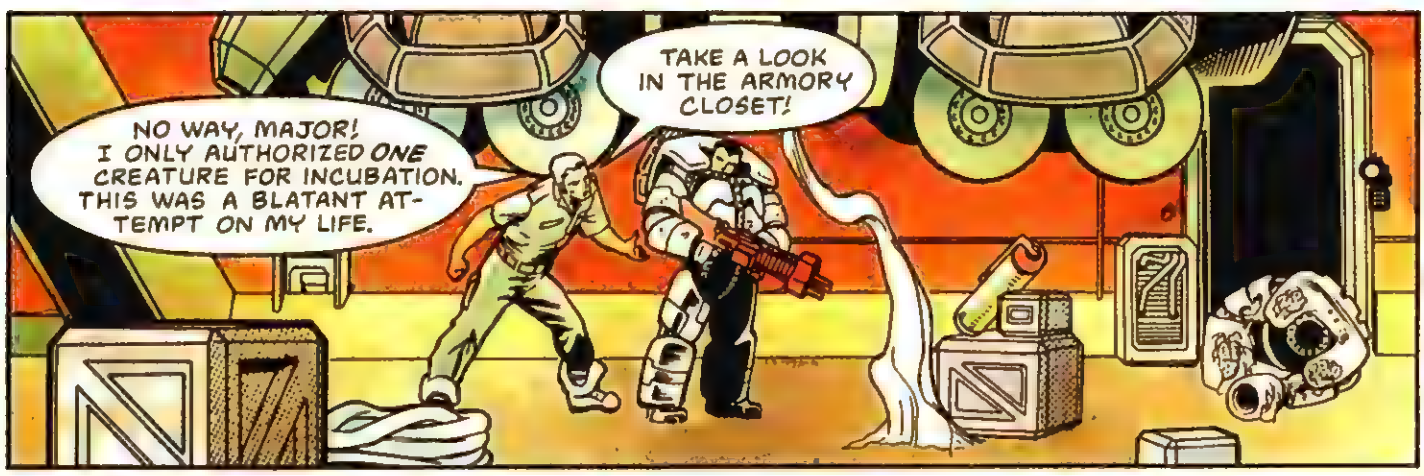
WHACK


SHH KOW!!

WHOA! YOU SURE SAVED MY ASS, SOLDIER!

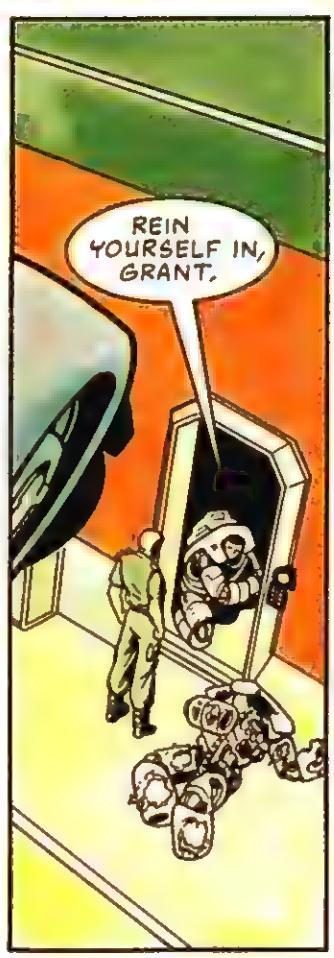
YEAH, WELL, THAT'S MY JOB.

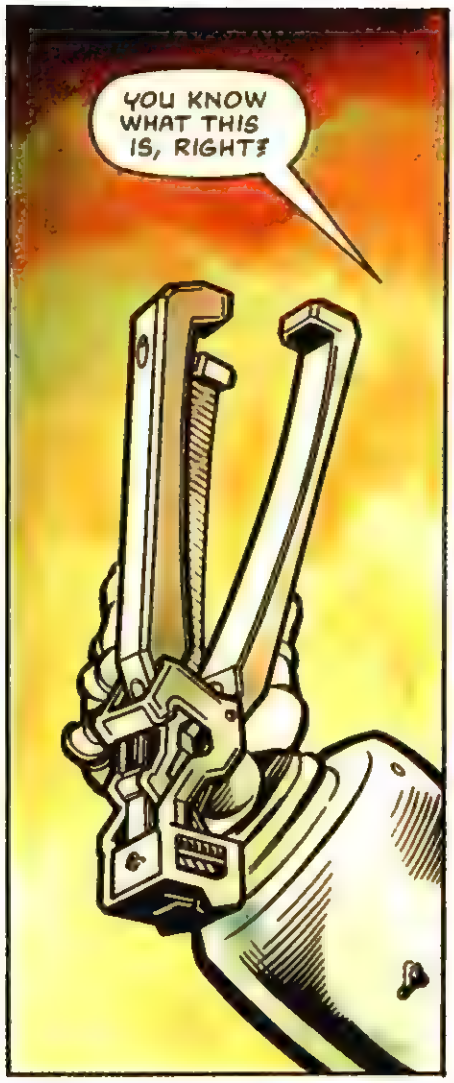

LOOKS LIKE ONE OF YOUR PETS WANDERED OFF THE BEATEN TRACK.
SSSSSSSSS


NO WAY, MAJOR! I ONLY AUTHORIZED *ONE* CREATURE FOR INCUBATION. THIS WAS A BLATANT ATTEMPT ON MY LIFE.
TAKE A LOOK IN THE ARMORY CLOSET!

I WAS THE ONLY ONE NOT ARMORED, SO IT'S OBVIOUS THIS THING WAS PLANTED TO GET ME WHEN I CAME BACK HERE.
IT'S GOT TO BE BEGALLI. HE MUST STILL BE WORKING FOR THOSE SCUMBAGS AT MEDTECH. I WANT YOU TO PUT THAT BASTARD UNDER ARREST--

--OR HANG HIM.

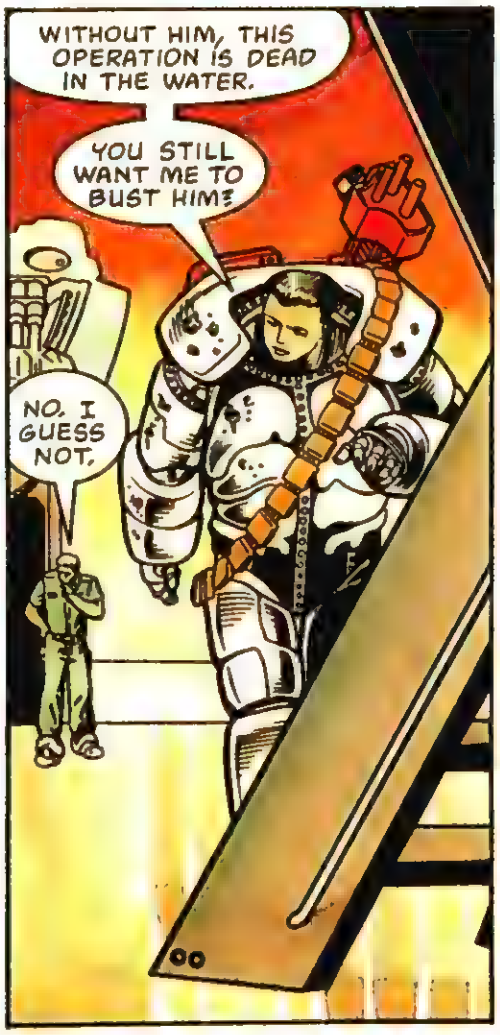

REIN YOURSELF IN, GRANT.


YOU KNOW WHAT THIS IS, RIGHT?

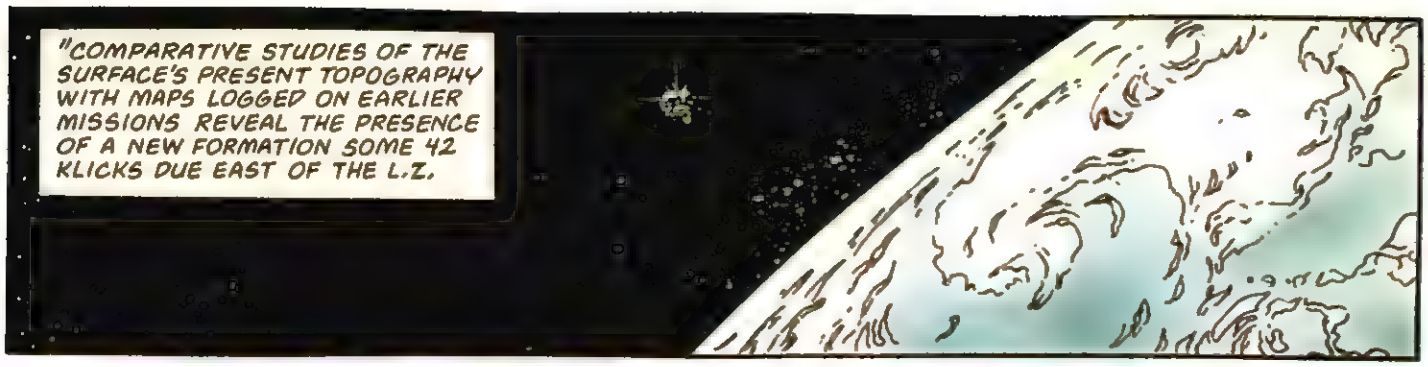
OF COURSE. IT'S A TIMER CLAMP.
IT'S USED TO HOLD THE LIPS OF AN EGG SHUT TO INSURE THE CREATURE CAN'T ESCAPE DURING TRANSPORTATION.

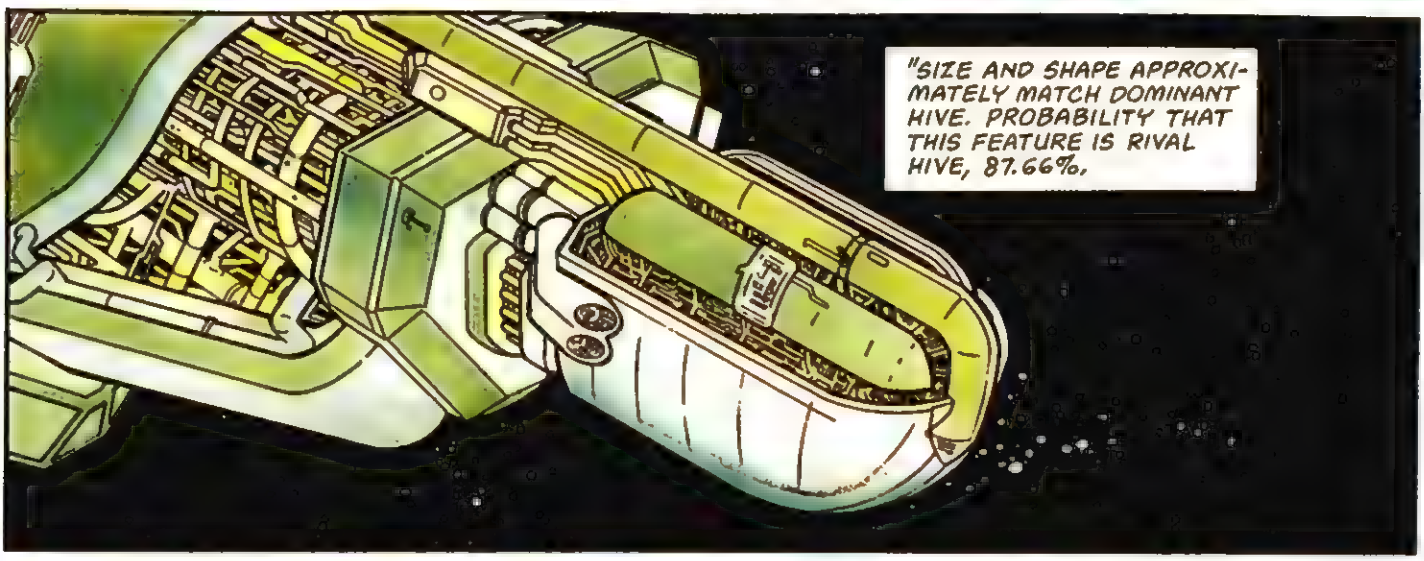
AND IT AUTOMATICALLY FALLS OFF WHEN THE TIMER EXPIRES. NOBODY IS ANYWHERE NEAR THE EGG WHEN IT "ACTIVATES."
SO?
SO, ANYONE COULD HAVE PLANTED THIS EGG... EVEN ME.

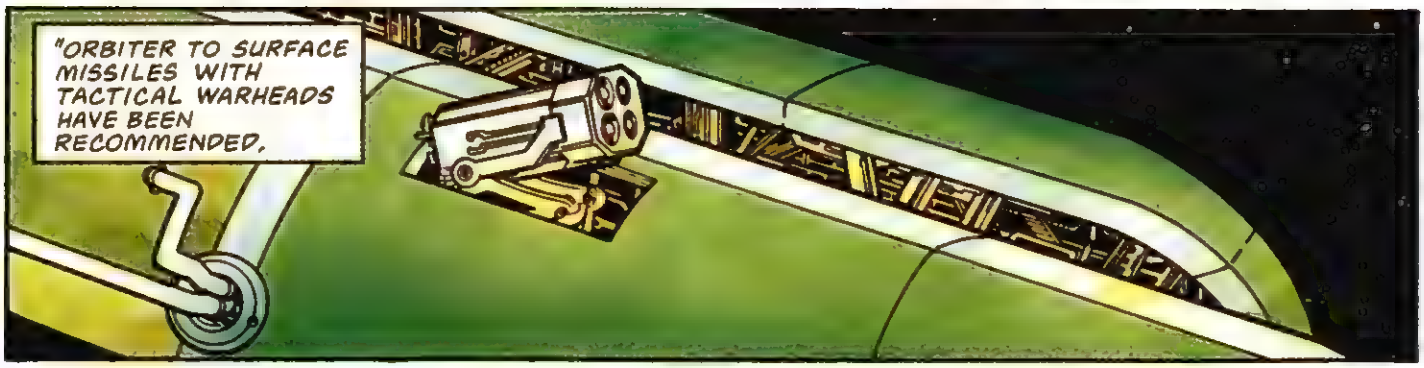
BEGALLI IS THE ONLY ALIEN EXPERT IN THE LANDING PARTY.
MAYBE YOU DON'T KNOW THIS, BUT ALL RADIO SIGNALS ARE SCRAMBLED BY THOSE HIVES. ONCE INSIDE, WE'LL HAVE NO COMMUNICATION WITH THE LANDER.
WE'RE GOING TO NEED "THAT BASTARD" IN THERE MORE THAN ANY OTHER CREW MEMBER.


WITHOUT HIM, THIS OPERATION IS DEAD IN THE WATER.
YOU STILL WANT ME TO BUST HIM?
NO. I GUESS NOT.

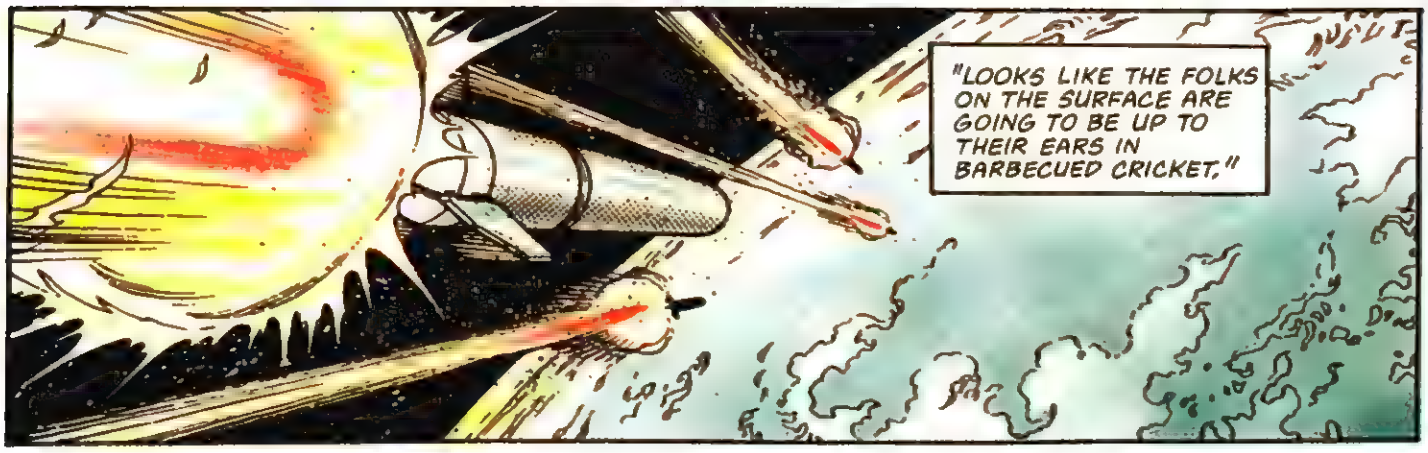
I'M GOING TO START THE SEARCH AND DESTROY MISSION ON THE RIVAL HIVE.
TRY TO STAY OUT OF TROUBLE, OKAY?

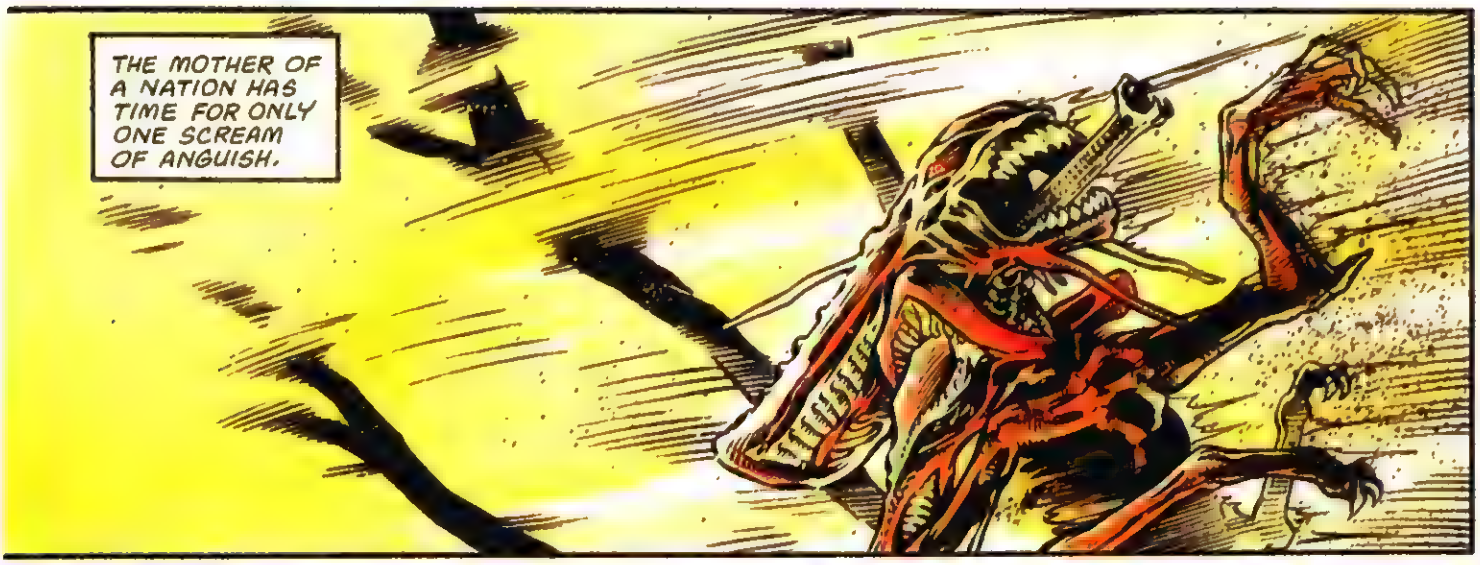

"COMPARATIVE STUDIES OF THE SURFACE'S PRESENT TOPOGRAPHY WITH MAPS LOGGED ON EARLIER MISSIONS REVEAL THE PRESENCE OF A NEW FORMATION SOME 42 KLICKS DUE EAST OF THE L.Z.


"SIZE AND SHAPE APPROXIMATELY MATCH DOMINANT HIVE. PROBABILITY THAT THIS FEATURE IS RIVAL HIVE, 87.66%.


"ORBITER TO SURFACE MISSILES WITH TACTICAL WARHEADS HAVE BEEN RECOMMENDED.

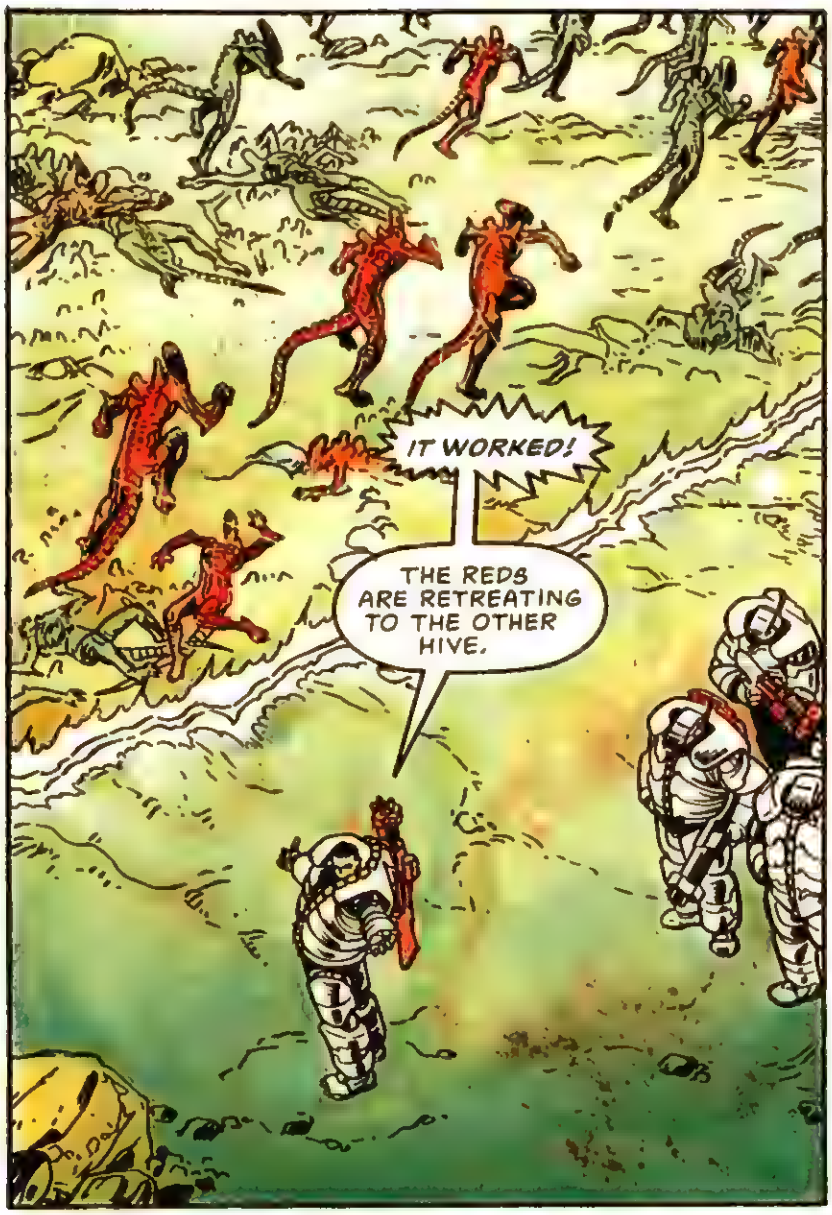
"ORDNANCE HAS BEEN DELIVERED.

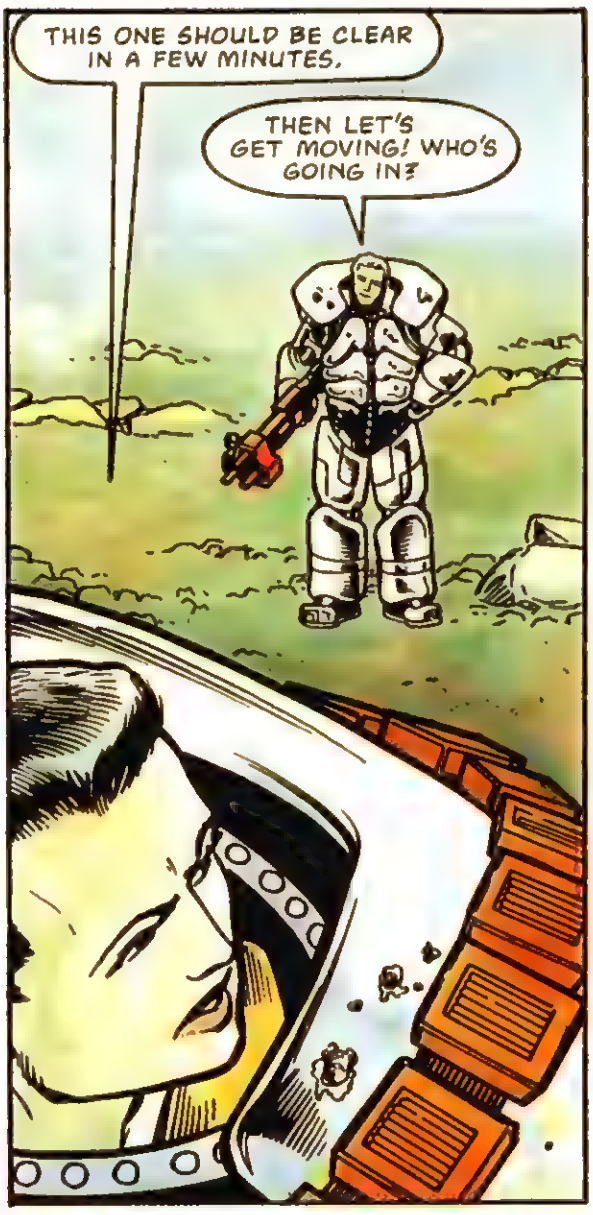

"LOOKS LIKE THE FOLKS ON THE SURFACE ARE GOING TO BE UP TO THEIR EARS IN BARBECUED CRICKET."


THE MOTHER OF A NATION HAS TIME FOR ONLY ONE SCREAM OF ANGUISH.

A SCREAM HEARD BY EACH OF HER VAST BROOD.

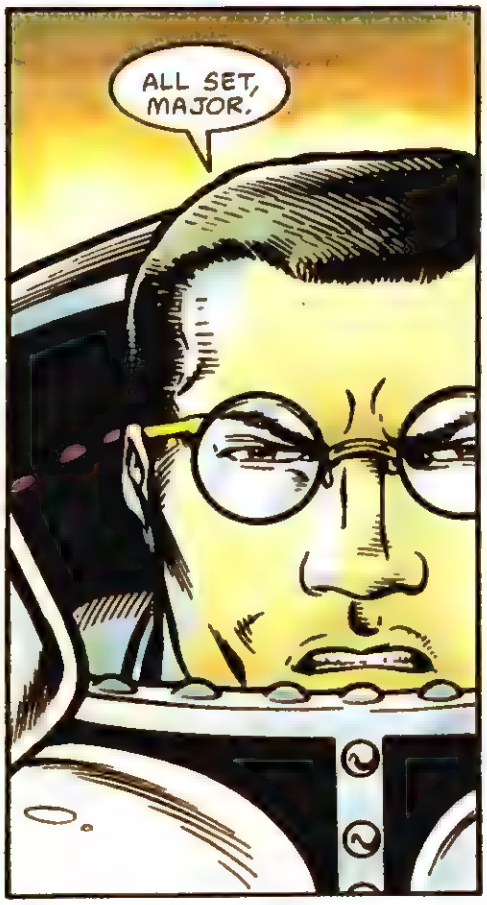
A SCREAM WHICH SOUNDS THE DEATH KNELL OF THE NEW ORDER.

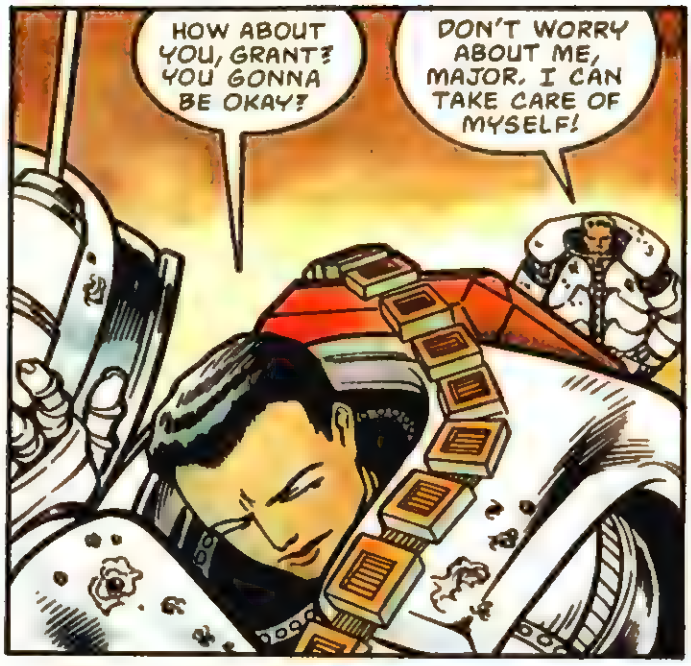

IT WORKED!
THE REDS ARE RETREATING TO THE OTHER HIVE.

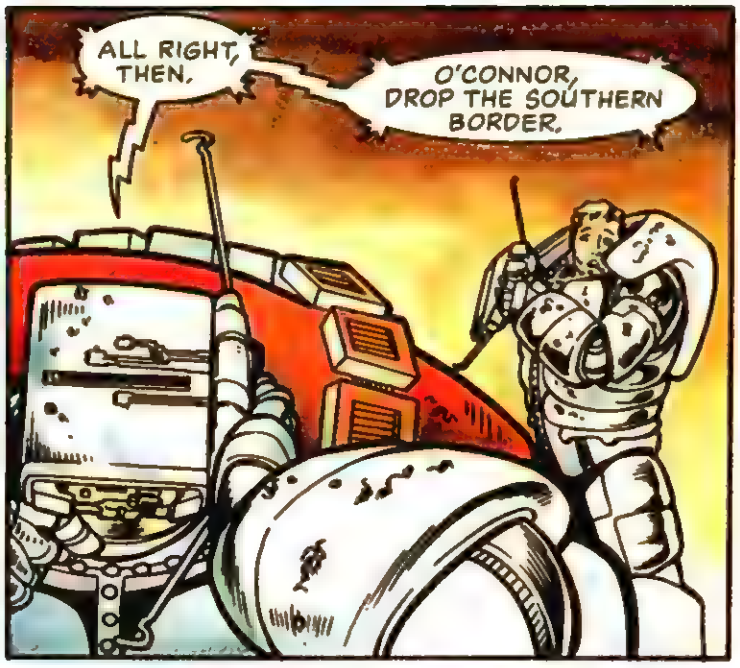

THIS ONE SHOULD BE CLEAR IN A FEW MINUTES.
THEN LET'S GET MOVING! WHO'S GOING IN?

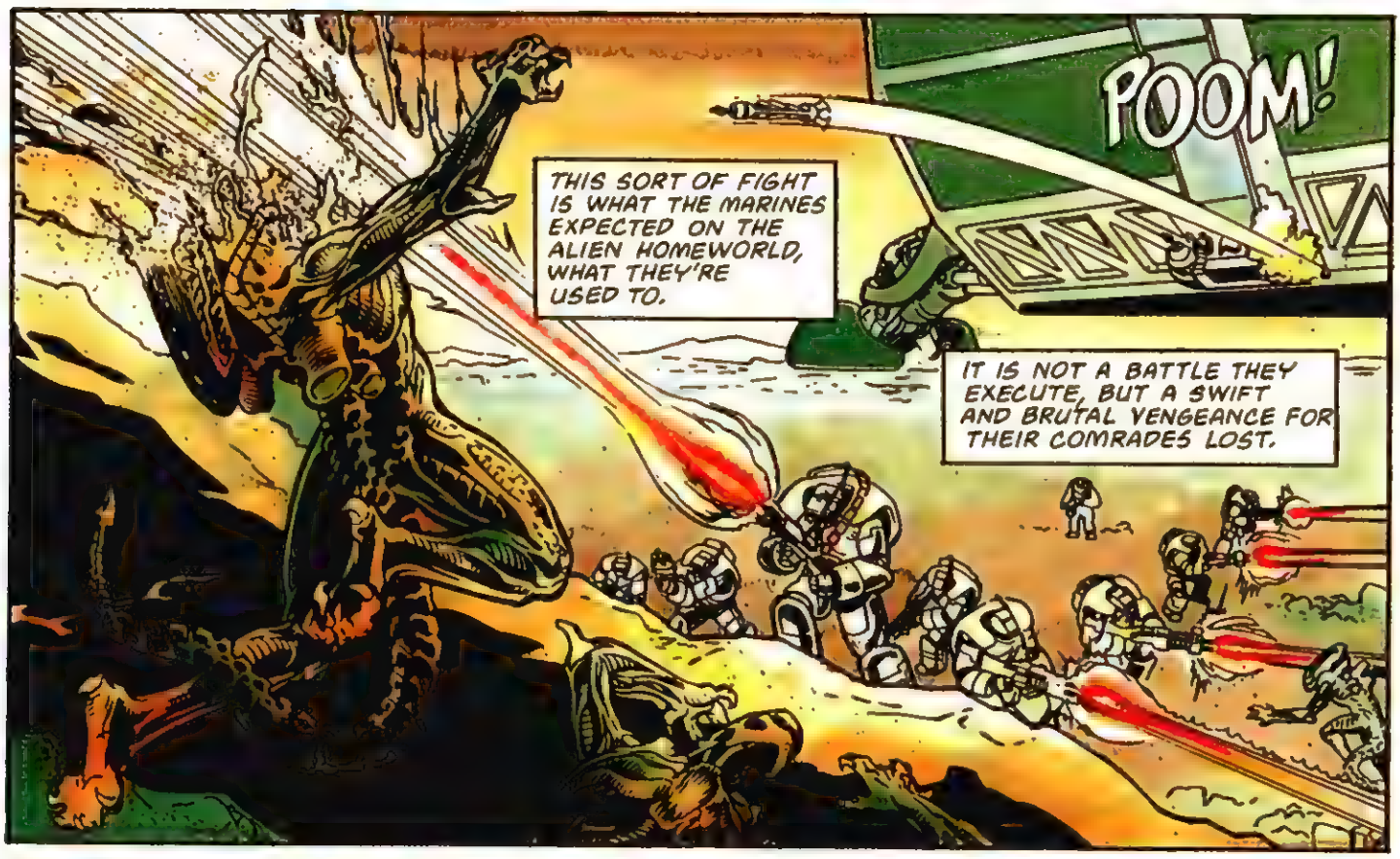
EVERYONE BUT THE TECHNICAL CREW --AND ELLIS.
MAKES SENSE. HE'S TAKING JASTROW'S DEATH PRETTY HARD.

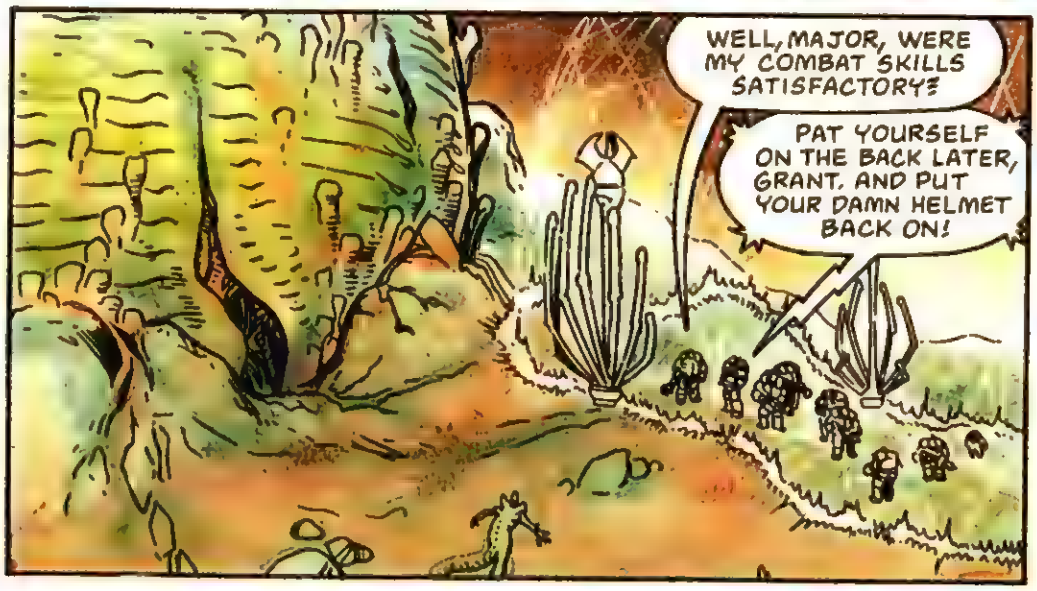
THEY GREW UP TOGETHER, JOINED THE CORPS TOGETHER, AND FOUGHT FOR YEARS IN THE SAME UNIT.
HE'S A GOOD MARINE, AND HE'LL BE OKAY IN A FEW DAYS, BUT I'D RATHER NOT HAVE HIM IN CLOSE COMBAT RIGHT NOW.
BESIDES, SOMEONE HAS TO MAN THE GUNS.

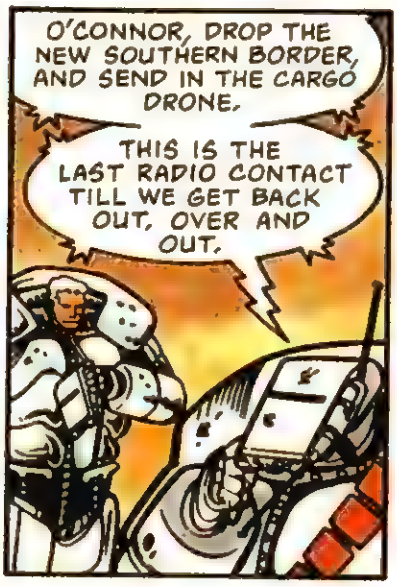

ALL SET, MAJOR.

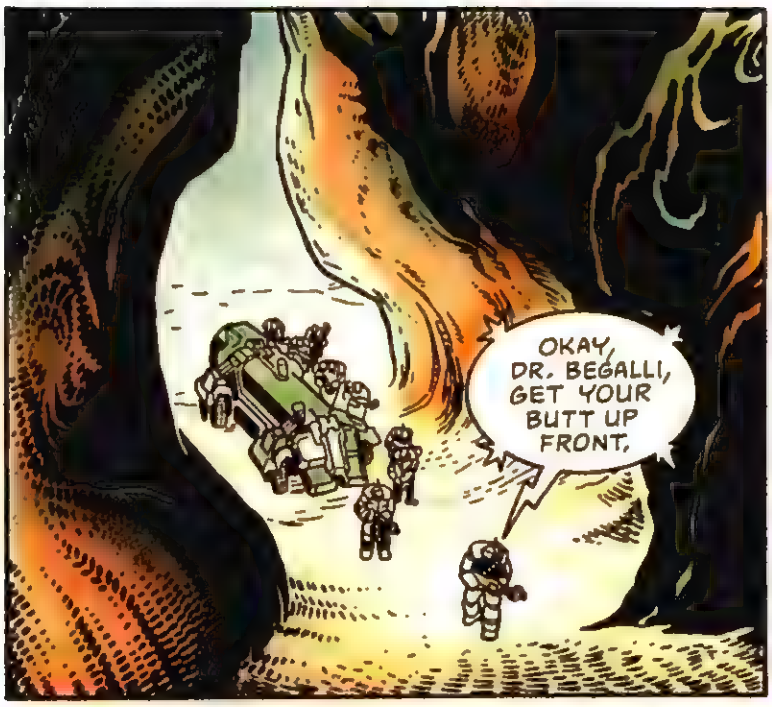

HOW ABOUT YOU, GRANT? YOU GONNA BE OKAY?
DON'T WORRY ABOUT ME, MAJOR. I CAN TAKE CARE OF MYSELF!


ALL RIGHT, THEN.
O'CONNOR, DROP THE SOUTHERN BORDER.


POOM!
THIS SORT OF FIGHT IS WHAT THE MARINES EXPECTED ON THE ALIEN HOMEWORLD, WHAT THEY'RE USED TO.
IT IS NOT A BATTLE THEY EXECUTE, BUT A SWIFT AND BRUTAL VENGEANCE FOR THEIR COMRADES LOST.

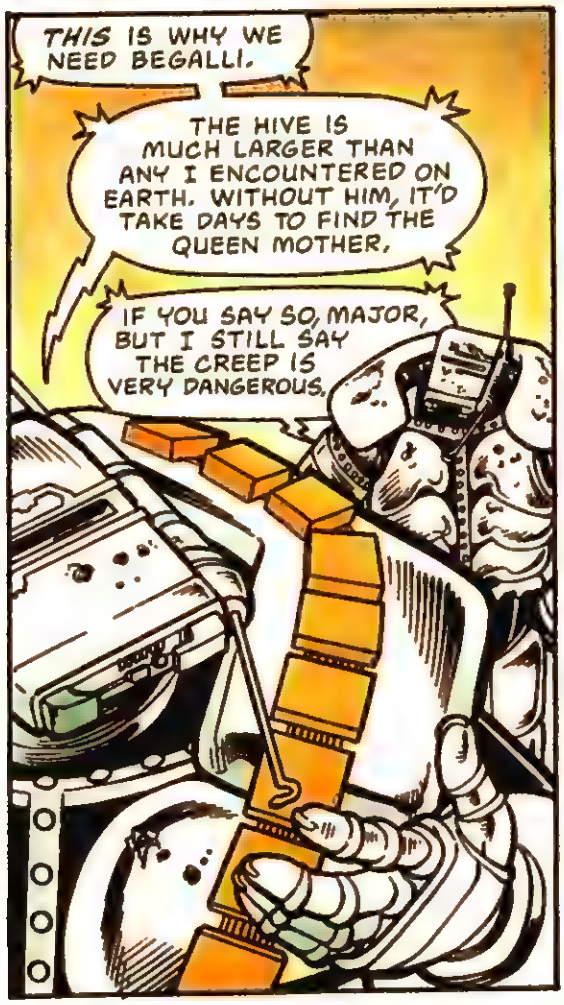

WELL, MAJOR, WERE MY COMBAT SKILLS SATISFACTORY?
PAT YOURSELF ON THE BACK LATER, GRANT, AND PUT YOUR DAMN HELMET BACK ON!

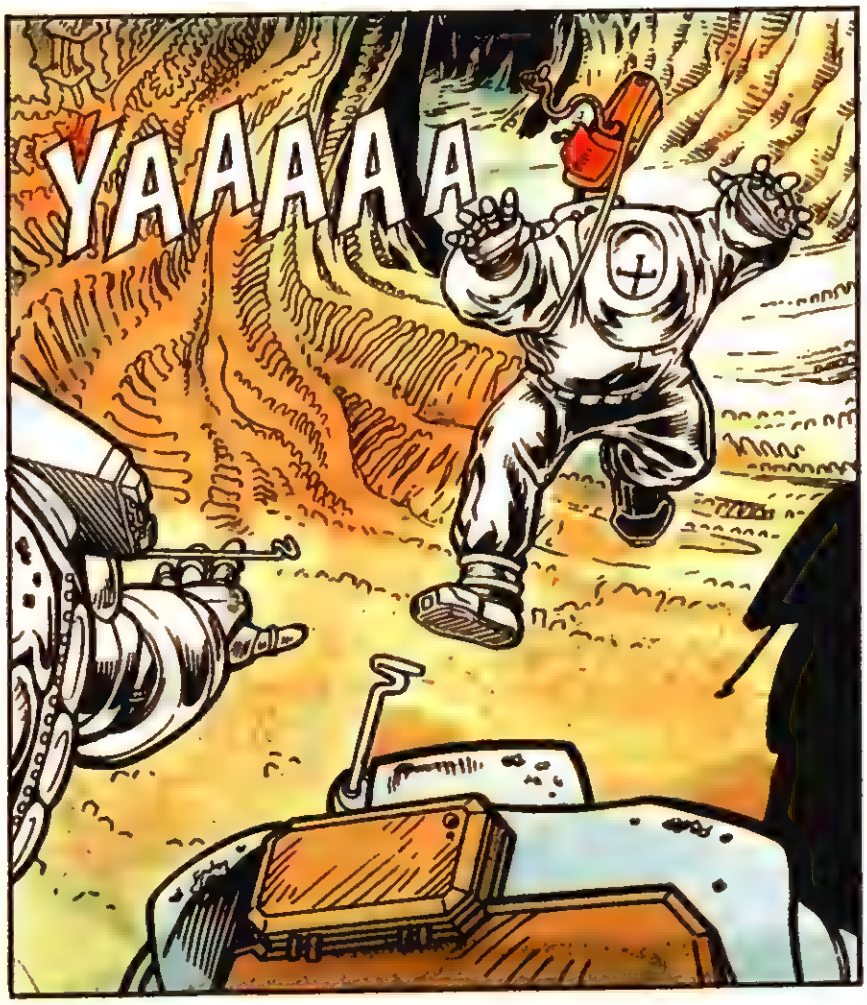

O'CONNOR, DROP THE NEW SOUTHERN BORDER, AND SEND IN THE CARGO DRONE.
THIS IS THE LAST RADIO CONTACT TILL WE GET BACK OUT, OVER AND OUT.

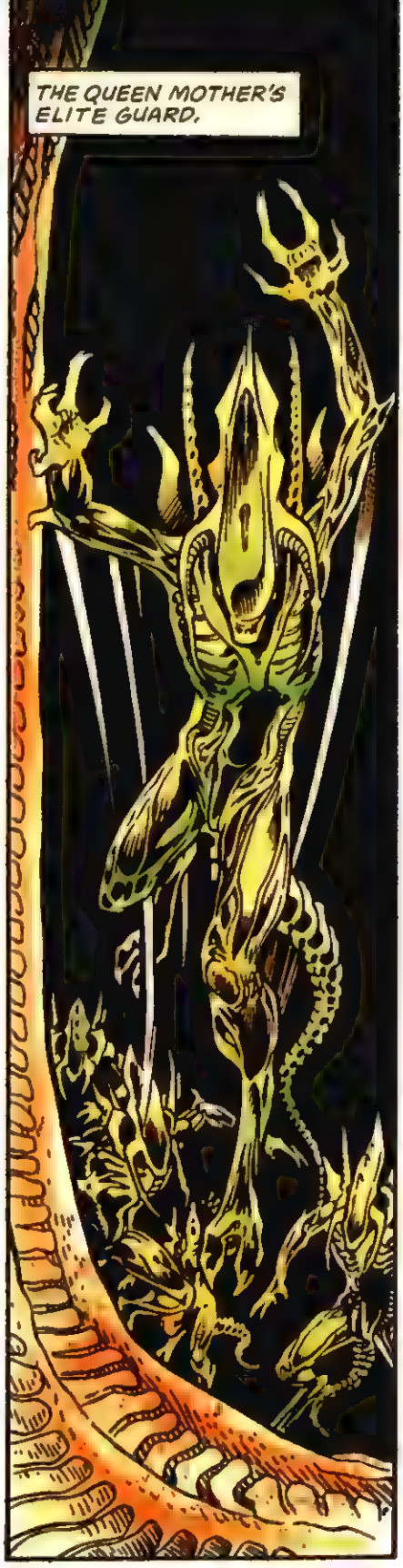

OKAY, DR. BEGALLI, GET YOUR BUTT UP FRONT.

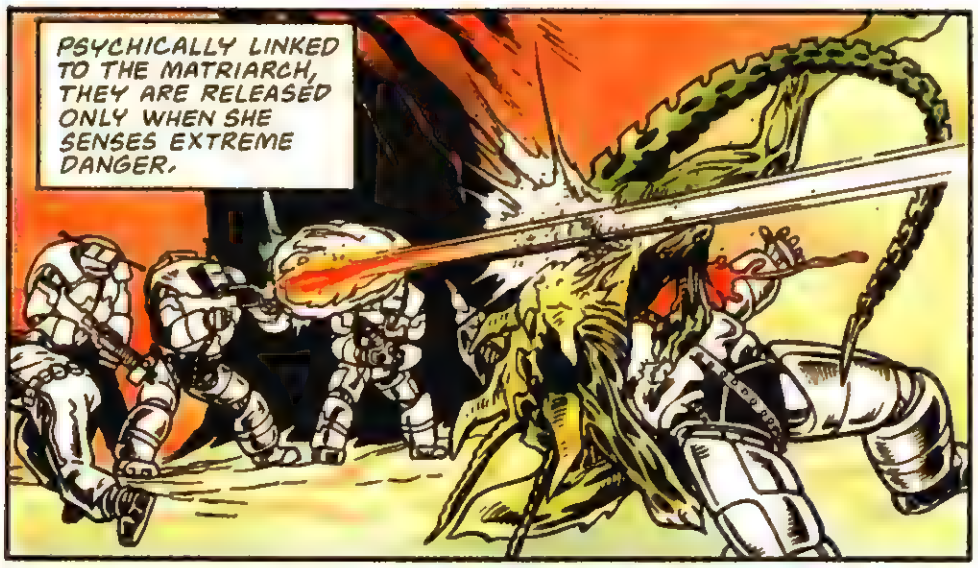
WELL, DOCTOR, WHICH WAY TO THE "BURIED TREASURE"?
WELL, THE PHEROMONE READINGS SEEM TO JIBE WITH WHAT I EXPECTED.

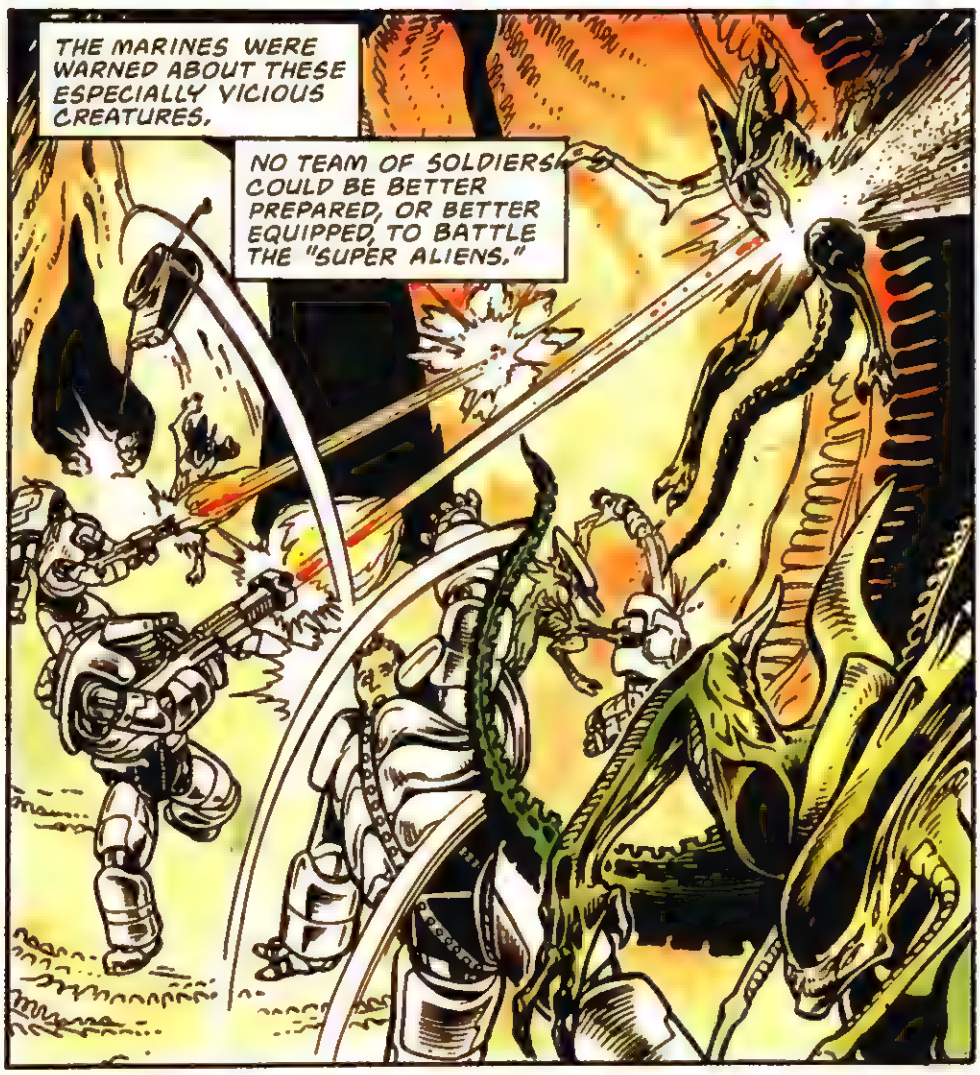
LET'S TRY *THIS* WAY.

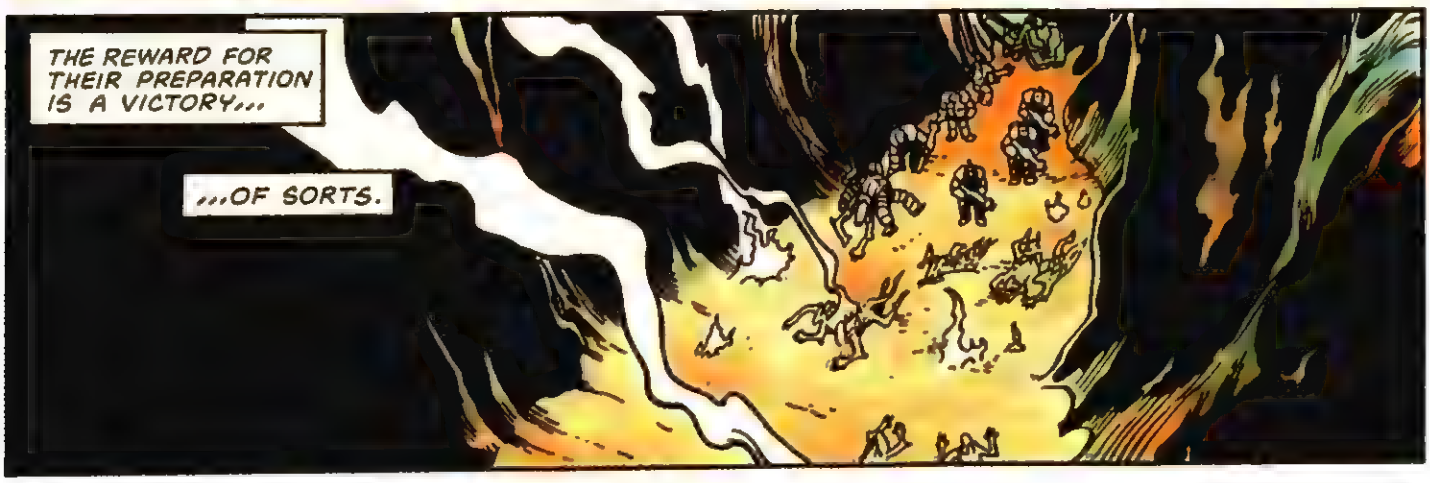

THIS IS WHY WE NEED BEGALLI.
THE HIVE IS MUCH LARGER THAN ANY I ENCOUNTERED ON EARTH. WITHOUT HIM, IT'D TAKE DAYS TO FIND THE QUEEN MOTHER.
IF YOU SAY SO, MAJOR, BUT I STILL SAY THE CREEP IS VERY DANGEROUS.

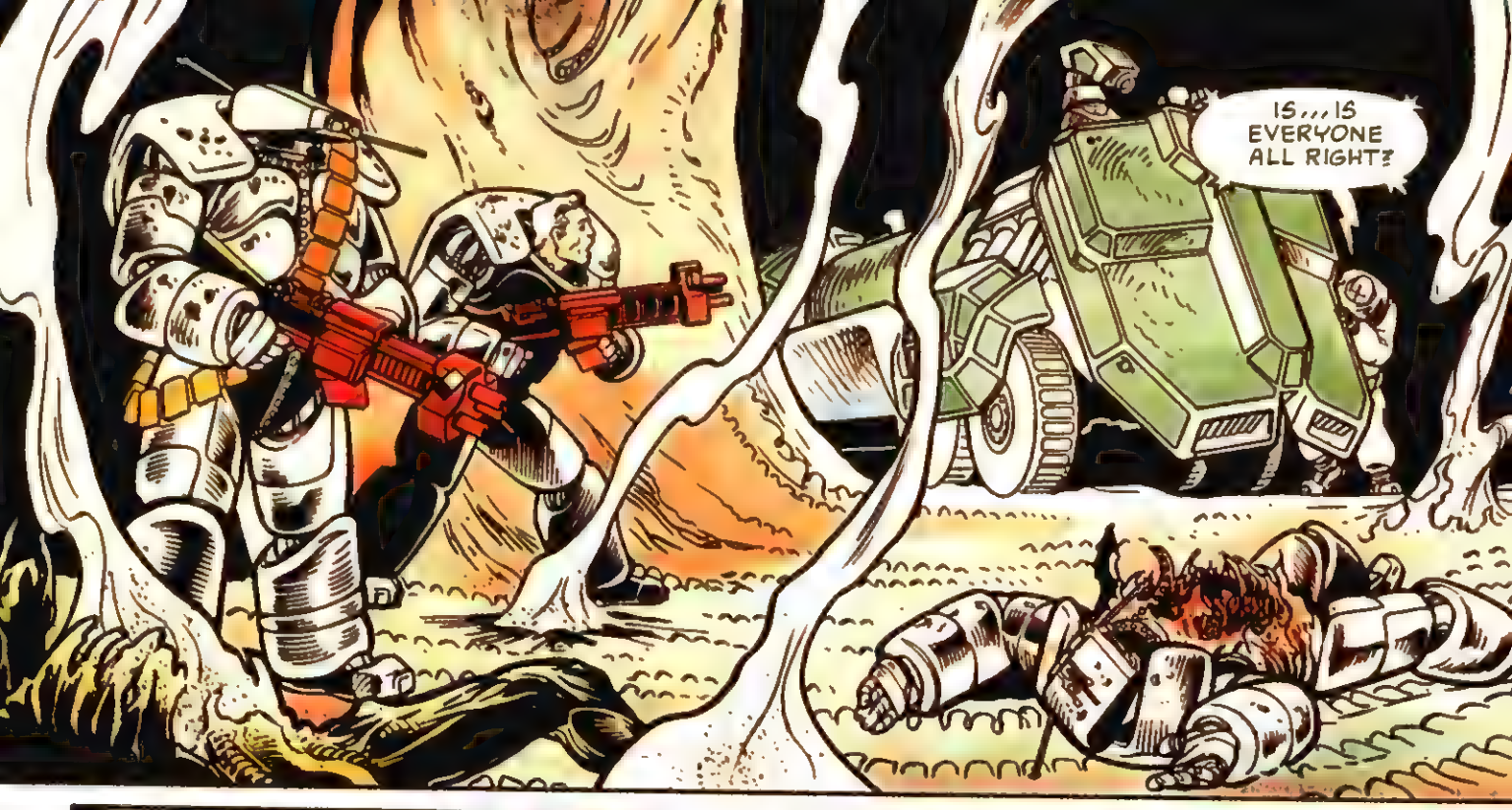

YAAAAA

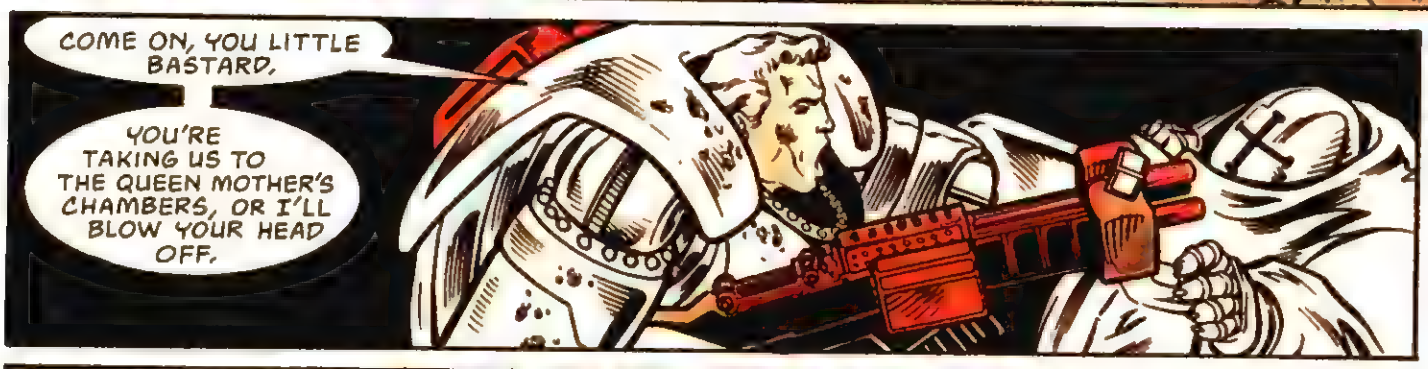

THE QUEEN MOTHER'S ELITE GUARD.


PSYCHICALLY LINKED TO THE MATRIARCH, THEY ARE RELEASED ONLY WHEN SHE SENSES EXTREME DANGER.

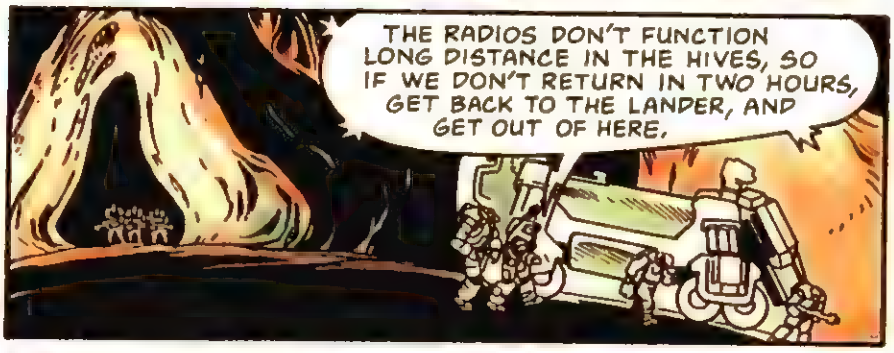

THE MARINES WERE WARNED ABOUT THESE ESPECIALLY VICIOUS CREATURES.
NO TEAM OF SOLDIERS COULD BE BETTER PREPARED, OR BETTER EQUIPPED, TO BATTLE THE "SUPER ALIENS."

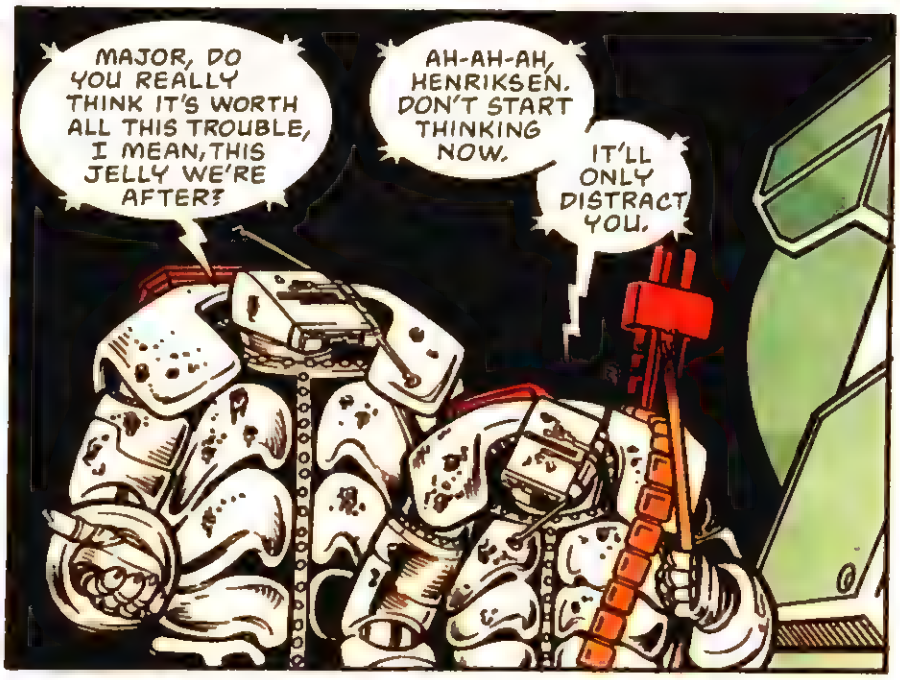

THE REWARD FOR THEIR PREPARATION IS A VICTORY...
...OF SORTS.

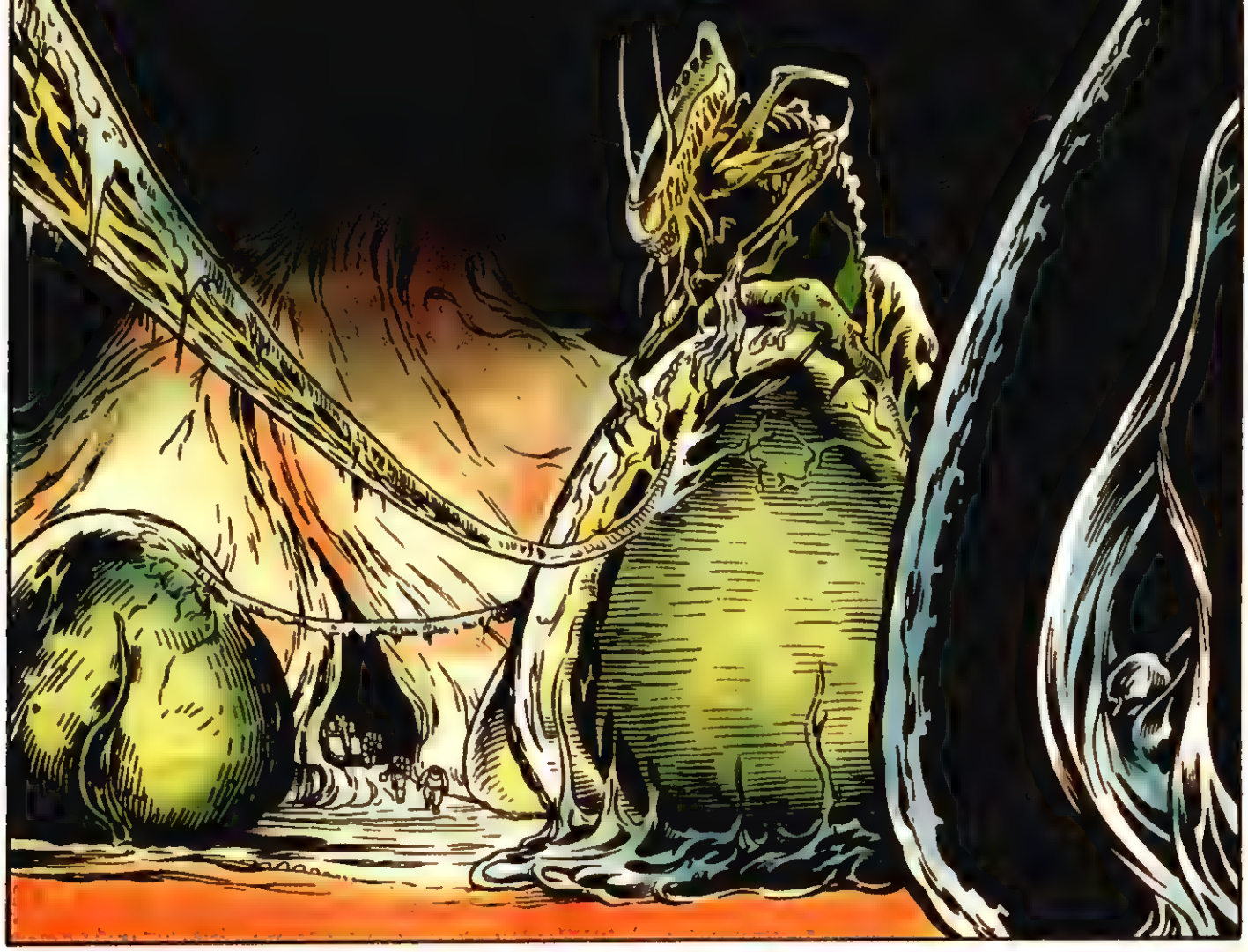

IS... IS EVERYONE ALL RIGHT?


COME ON, YOU LITTLE BASTARD.
YOU'RE TAKING US TO THE QUEEN MOTHER'S CHAMBERS, OR I'LL BLOW YOUR HEAD OFF.

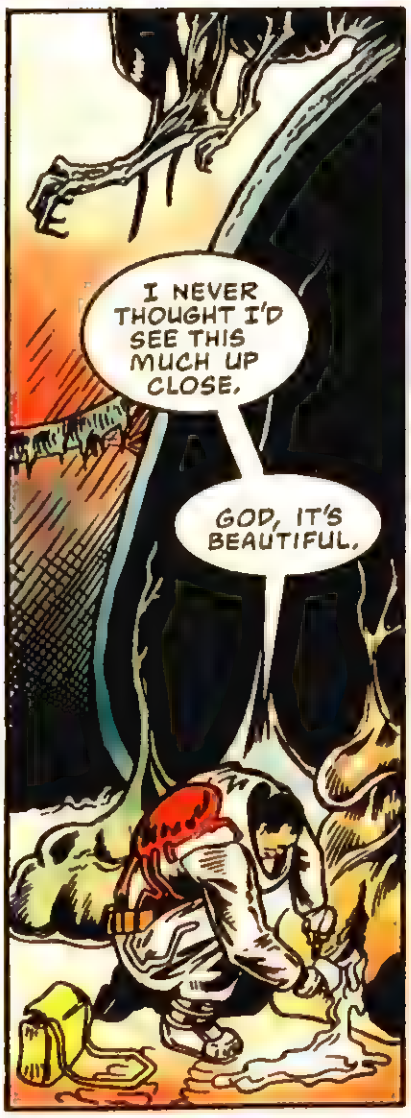
THERE ARE MORE SURPRISES HERE THAN I FIGURED ON, SO I WANT YOU THREE TO WATCH OUR BACKS.

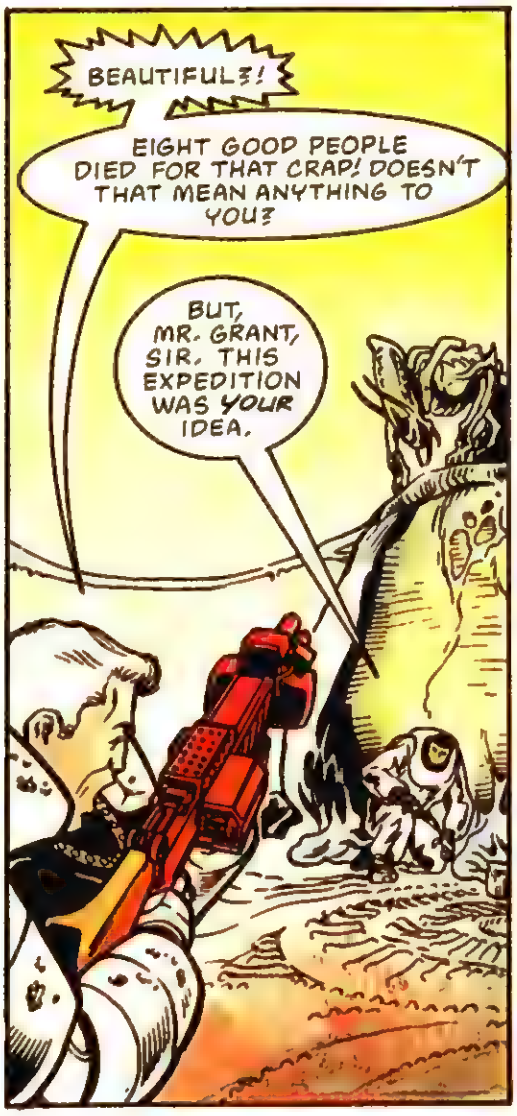

THE RADIOS DON'T FUNCTION LONG DISTANCE IN THE HIVES, SO IF WE DON'T RETURN IN TWO HOURS, GET BACK TO THE LANDER, AND GET OUT OF HERE.


MAJOR, DO YOU REALLY THINK IT'S WORTH ALL THIS TROUBLE, I MEAN, THIS JELLY WE'RE AFTER?
AH-AH-AH, HENRIKSEN. DON'T START THINKING NOW.
IT'LL ONLY DISTRACT YOU.

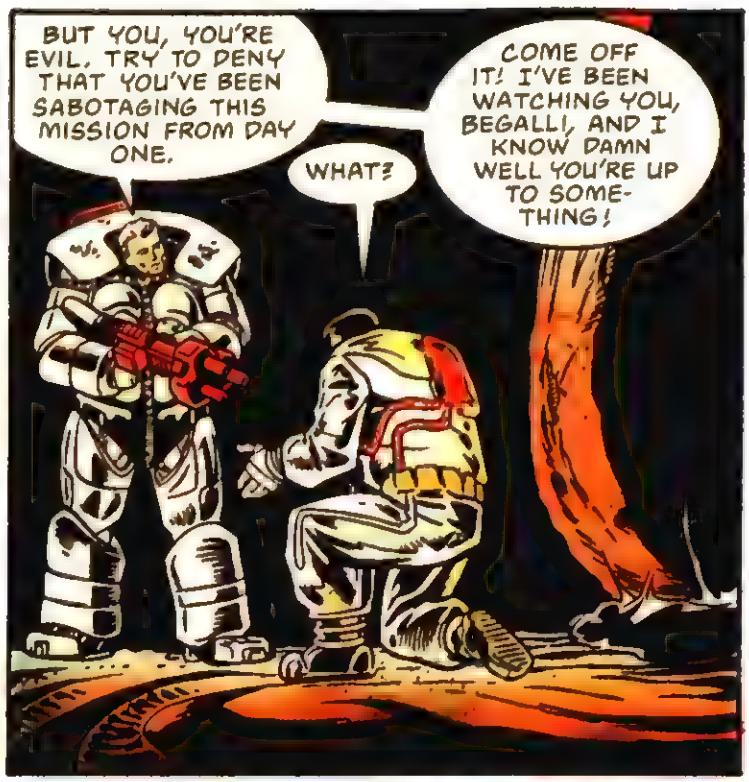


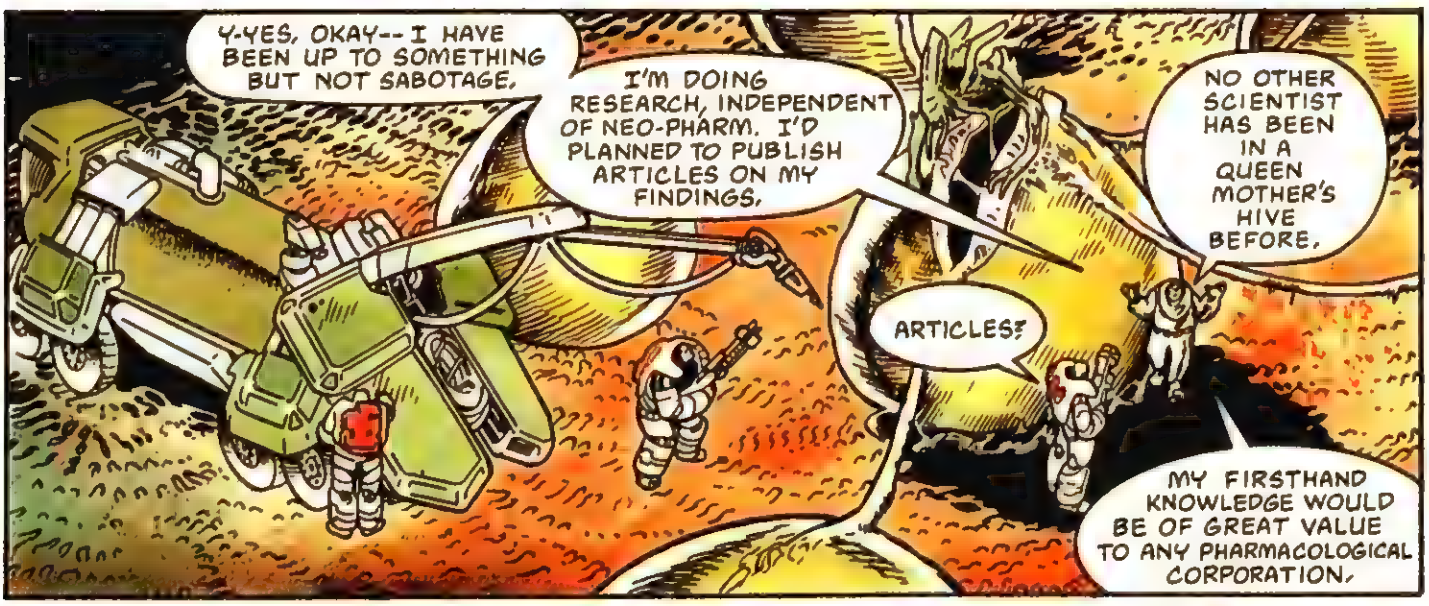
LOOK! LOOK AT IT ALL!


I NEVER THOUGHT I'D SEE THIS MUCH UP CLOSE.
GOD, IT'S BEAUTIFUL.

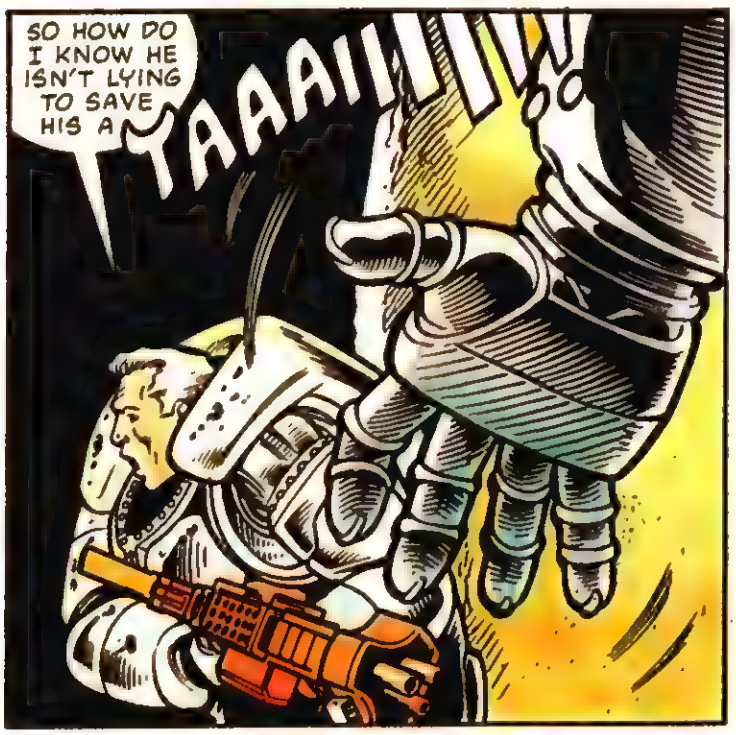

BEAUTIFUL?!
EIGHT GOOD PEOPLE DIED FOR THAT CRAP! DOESN'T THAT MEAN ANYTHING TO YOU?
BUT, MR. GRANT, SIR. THIS EXPEDITION WAS YOUR IDEA.

YEAH, AND I'LL HAVE TO LIVE WITH MYSELF FOR MAKING SUCH A HORRIBLE MISTAKE.
I WAS CARELESS, IGNORANT, AND INHUMANLY SELFISH.

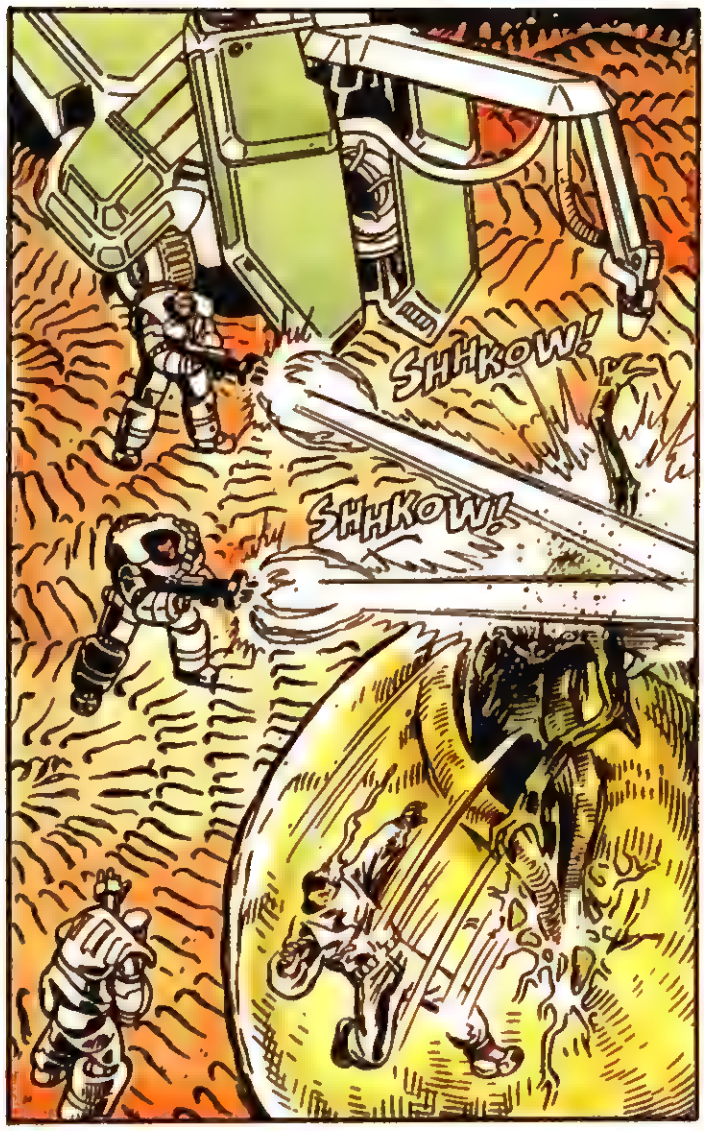

BUT YOU, YOU'RE EVIL. TRY TO DENY THAT YOU'VE BEEN SABOTAGING THIS MISSION FROM DAY ONE.
WHAT?
COME OFF IT! I'VE BEEN WATCHING YOU, BEGALLI, AND I KNOW DAMN WELL YOU'RE UP TO SOMETHING!

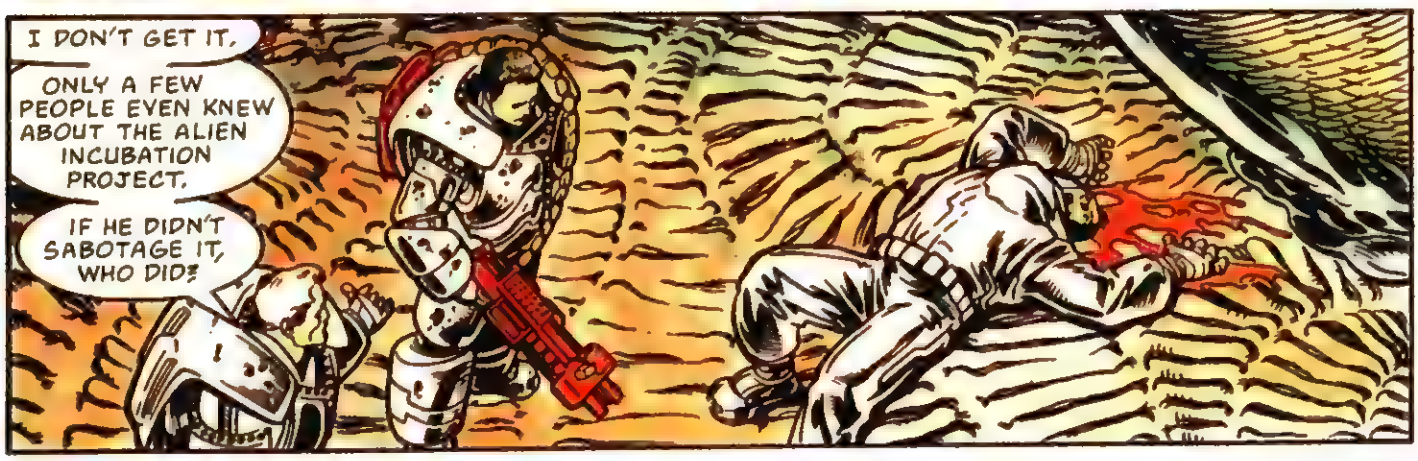

Y-YES, OKAY--I HAVE BEEN UP TO SOMETHING BUT NOT SABOTAGE.
I'M DOING RESEARCH, INDEPENDENT OF NEO-PHARM. I'D PLANNED TO PUBLISH ARTICLES ON MY FINDINGS.
NO OTHER SCIENTIST HAS BEEN IN A QUEEN MOTHER'S HIVE BEFORE.
ARTICLES?
MY FIRSTHAND KNOWLEDGE WOULD BE OF GREAT VALUE TO ANY PHARMACOLOGICAL CORPORATION.

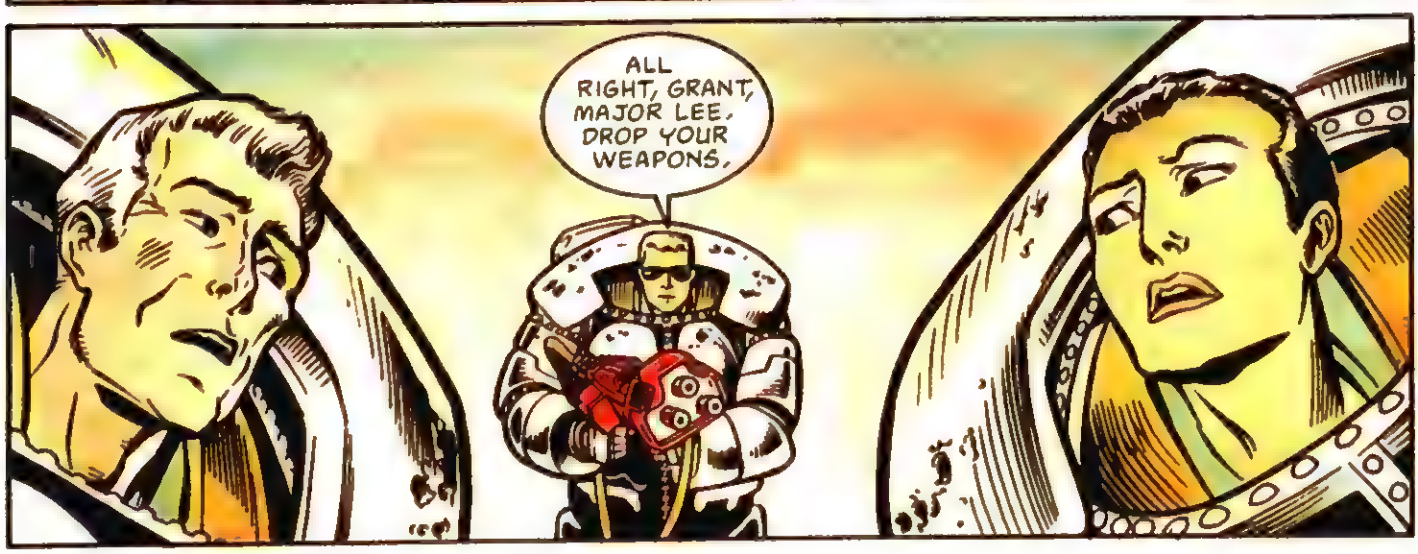
ARTICLES?
YOU HEARD THE GUY, GRANT! THE ONLY THING HE'S GUILTY OF IS GREED! NOW BACK OFF!

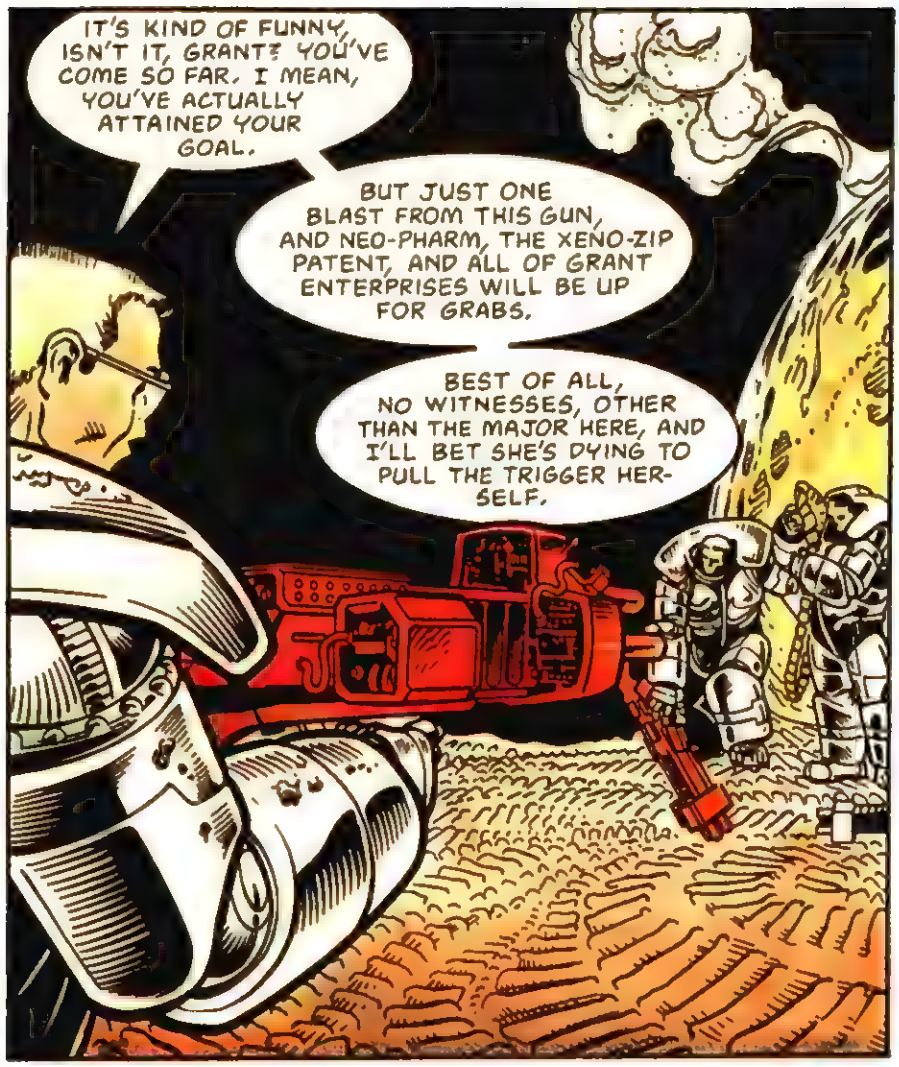

SO HOW DO I KNOW HE ISN'T LYING TO SAVE HIS A
TAAAII

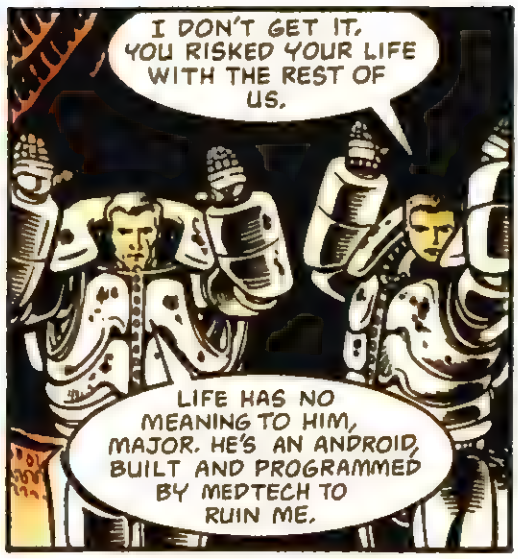
ALLLLLLLLLLLL SPLUTCH!


SHHKOW!
SHHKOW!


I DON'T GET IT.
ONLY A FEW PEOPLE EVEN KNEW ABOUT THE ALIEN INCUBATION PROJECT.
IF HE DIDN'T SABOTAGE IT, WHO DID?

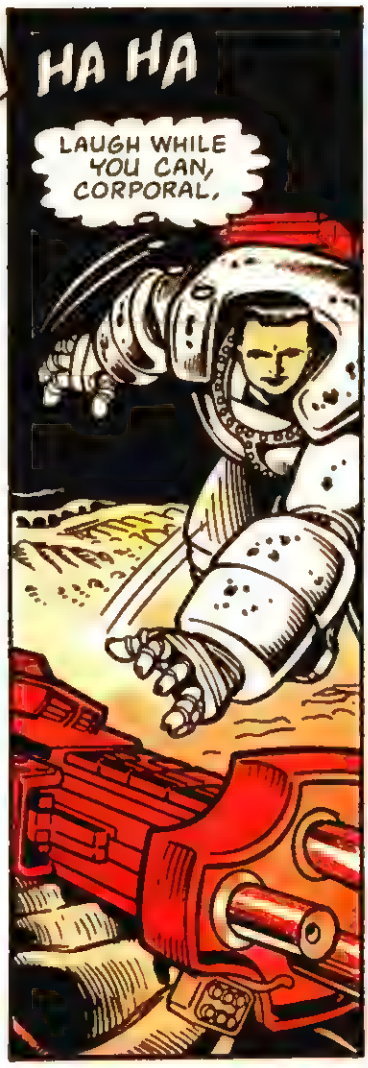

ALL RIGHT, GRANT, MAJOR LEE, DROP YOUR WEAPONS.


IT'S KIND OF FUNNY, ISN'T IT, GRANT? YOU'VE COME SO FAR. I MEAN, YOU'VE ACTUALLY ATTAINED YOUR GOAL.
BUT JUST ONE BLAST FROM THIS GUN, AND NEO-PHARM, THE XENO-ZIP PATENT, AND ALL OF GRANT ENTERPRISES WILL BE UP FOR GRABS.
BEST OF ALL, NO WITNESSES, OTHER THAN THE MAJOR HERE, AND I'LL BET SHE'S DYING TO PULL THE TRIGGER HERSELF.

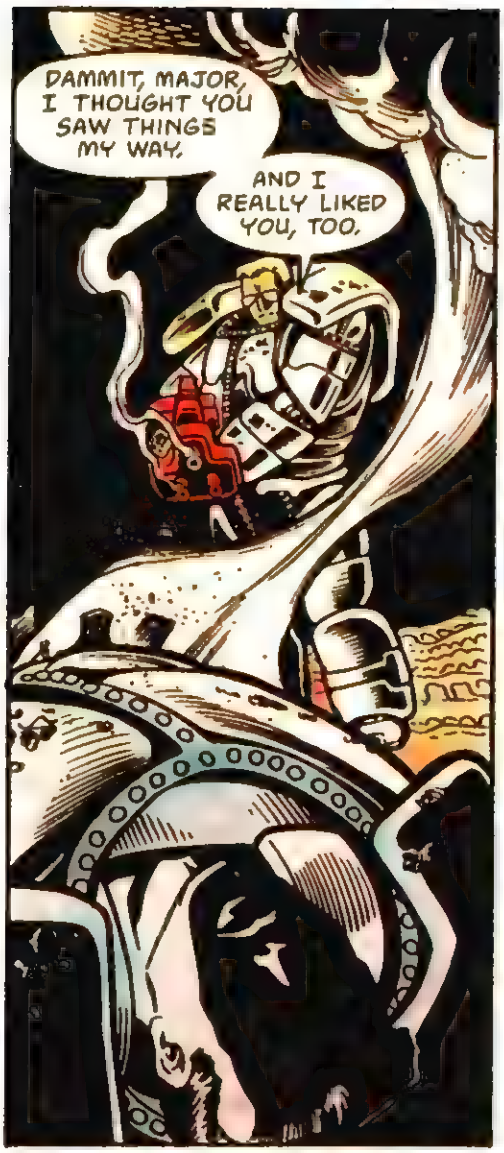

I DON'T GET IT. YOU RISKED YOUR LIFE WITH THE REST OF US.
LIFE HAS NO MEANING TO HIM, MAJOR. HE'S AN ANDROID, BUILT AND PROGRAMMED BY MEDTECH TO RUIN ME.

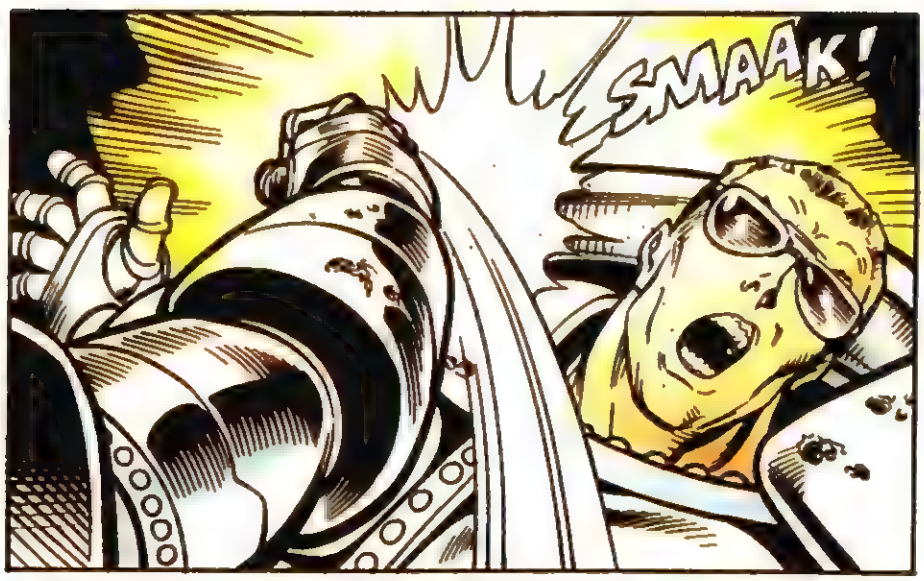
RIGHT, "HENRIKSEN"?

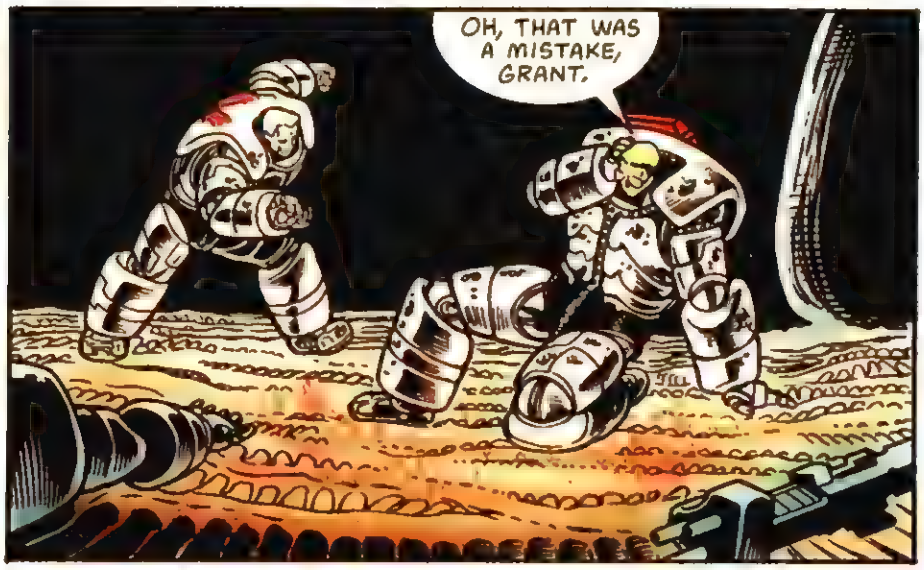
HEH, SURE, THAT'S IT. HEH HEH
HA HA HA

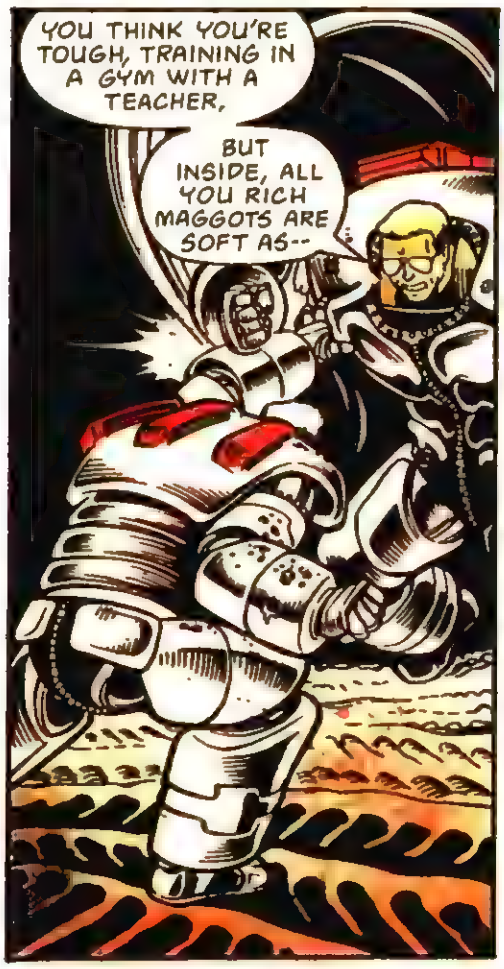

HA HA
LAUGH WHILE YOU CAN, CORPORAL.

SHHKOW!!

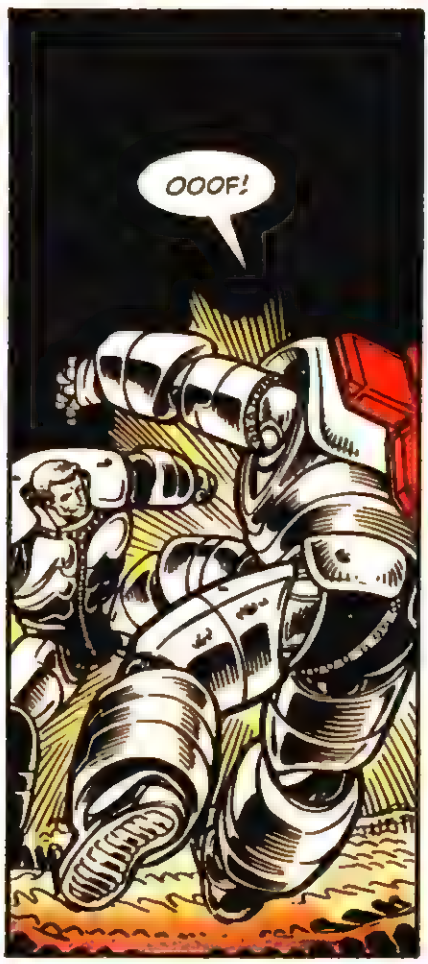

DAMMIT, MAJOR, I THOUGHT YOU SAW THINGS MY WAY.
AND I REALLY LIKED YOU, TOO.

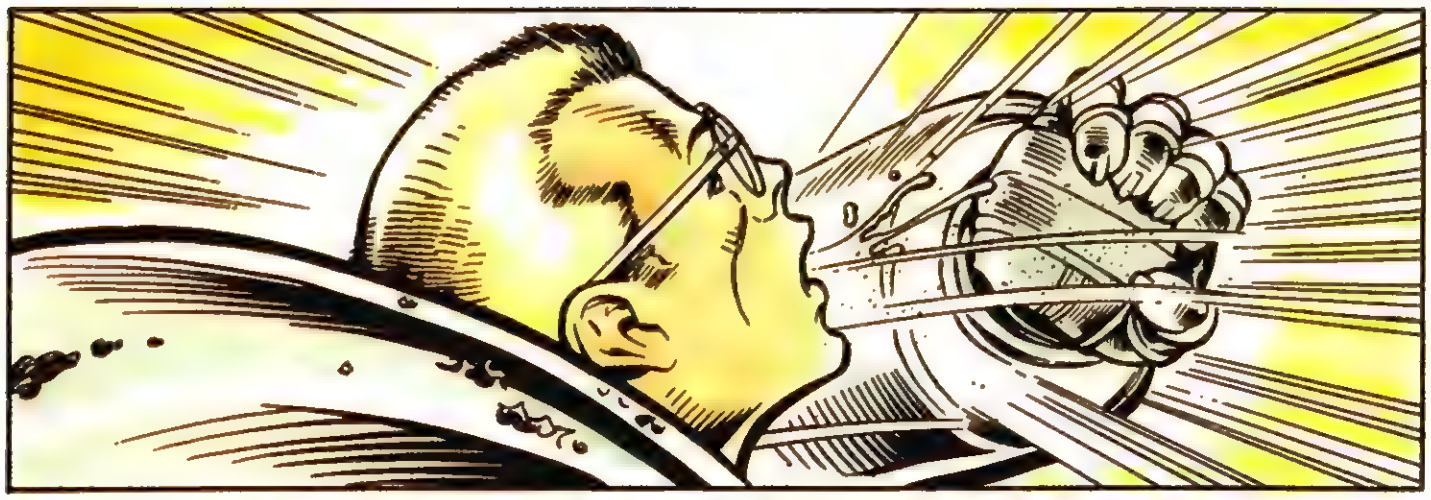

SMAAK!

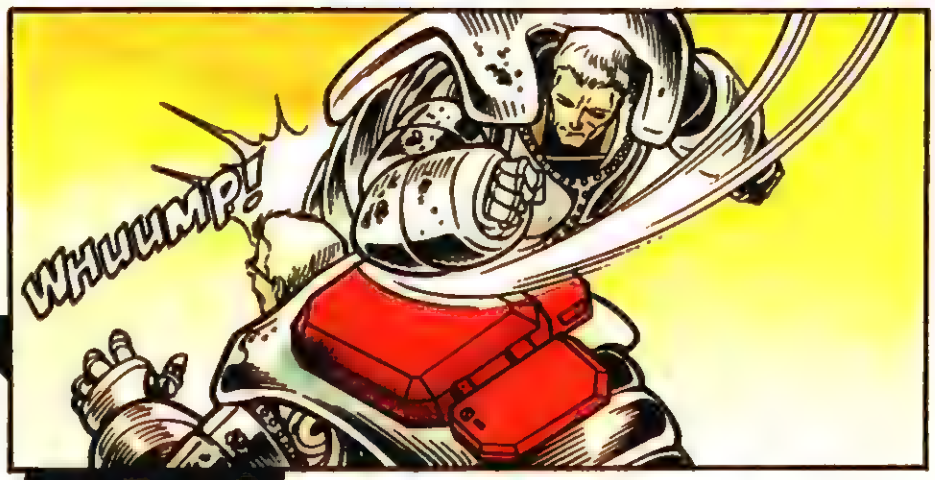

OH, THAT WAS A MISTAKE, GRANT.

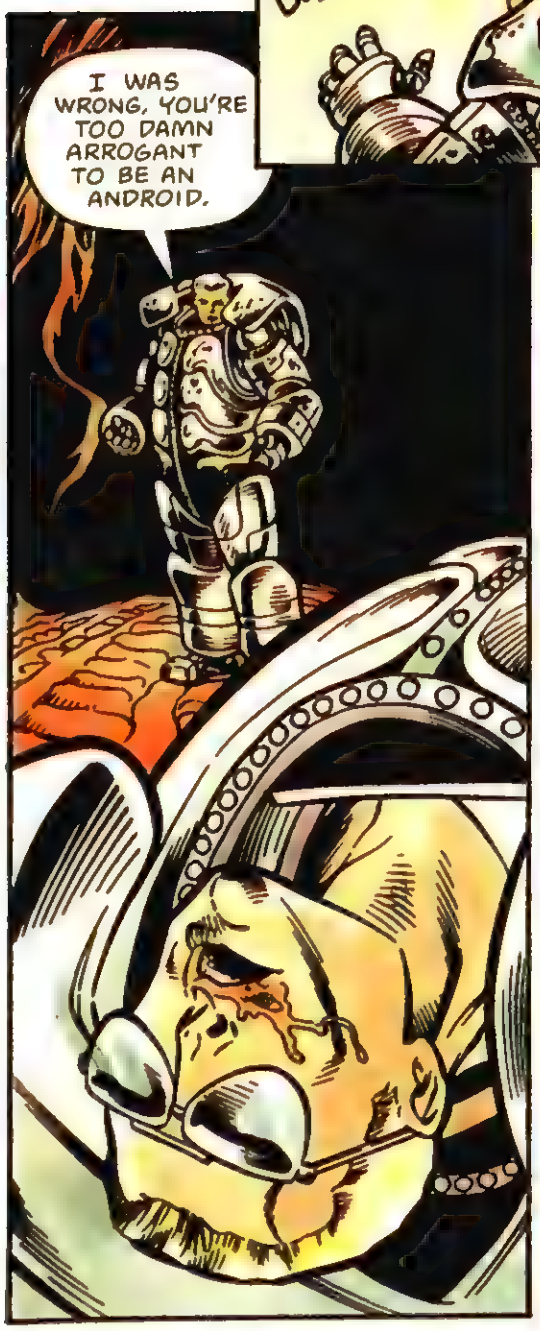

YOU THINK YOU'RE TOUGH, TRAINING IN A GYM WITH A TEACHER.
BUT INSIDE, ALL YOU RICH MAGGOTS ARE SOFT AS--

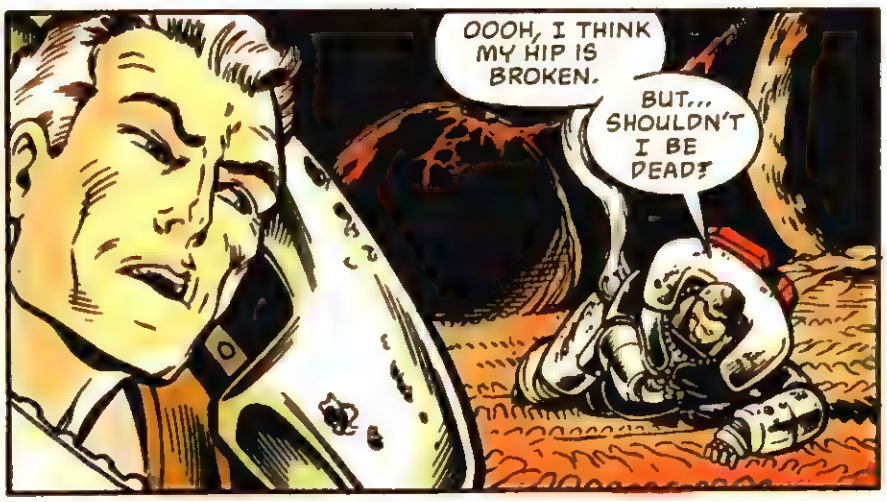
THOK!

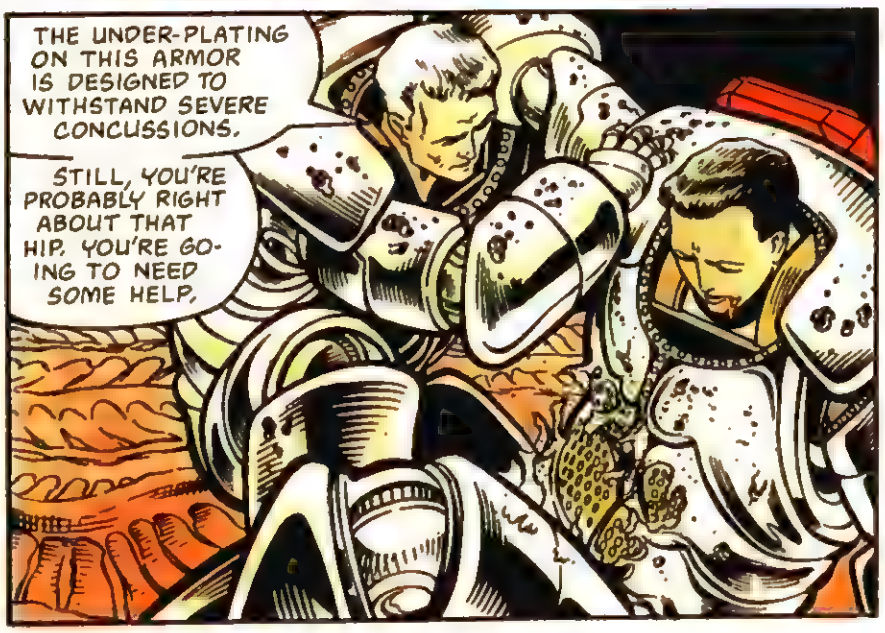

OOOF!

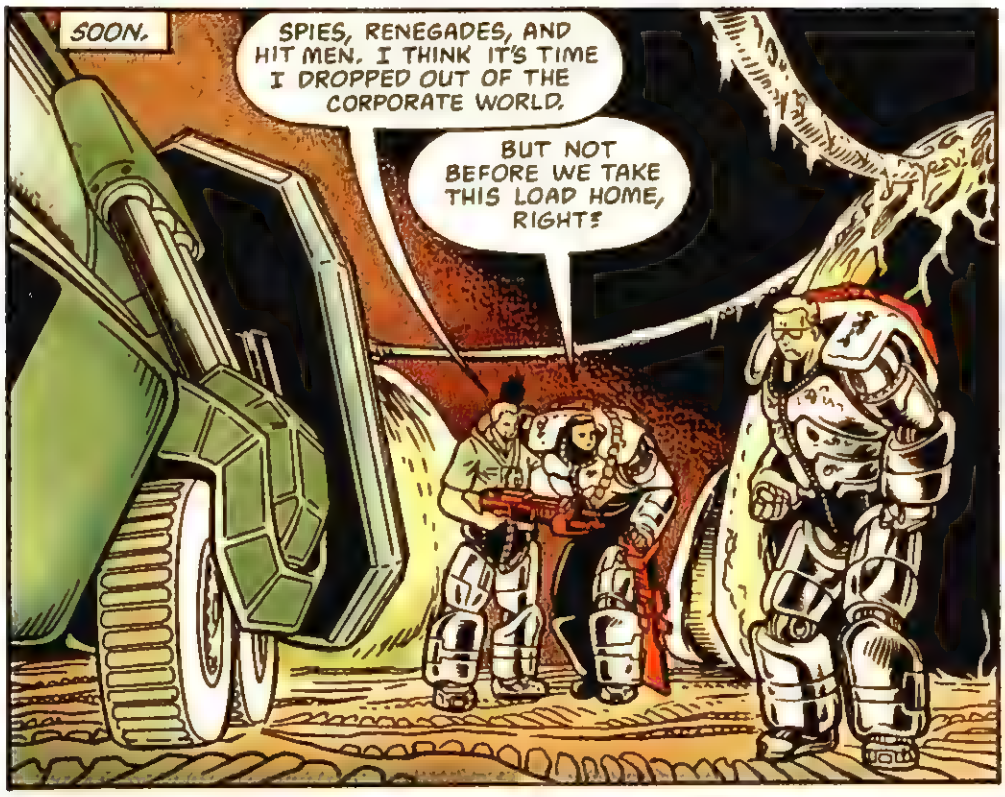



WHUUMP!

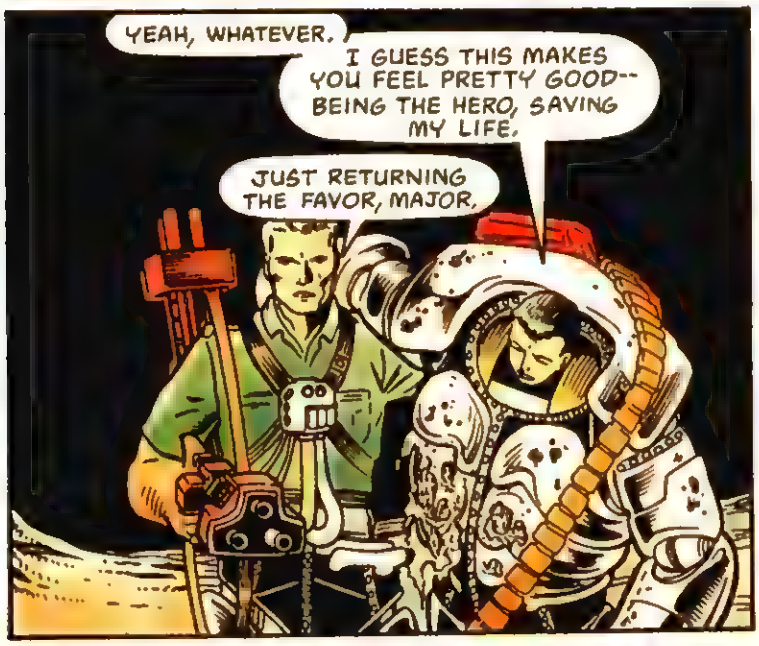

I WAS WRONG. YOU'RE TOO DAMN ARROGANT TO BE AN ANDROID.

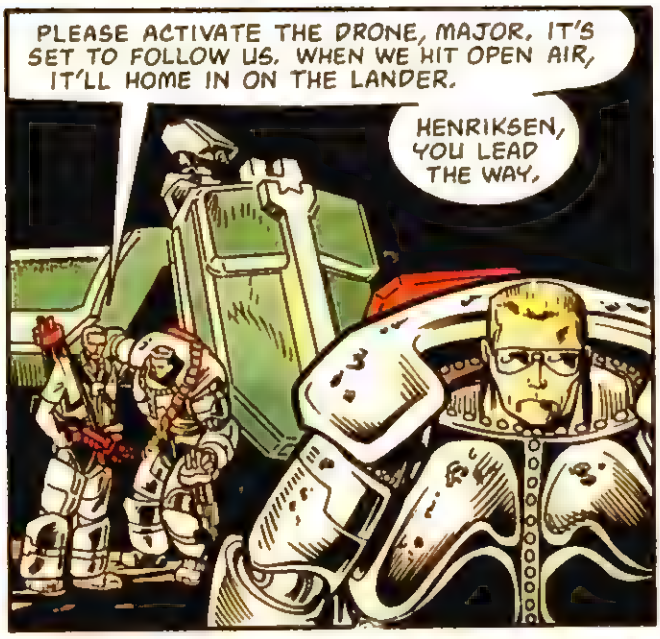

OOOH, I THINK MY HIP IS BROKEN.
BUT... SHOULDN'T I BE DEAD?

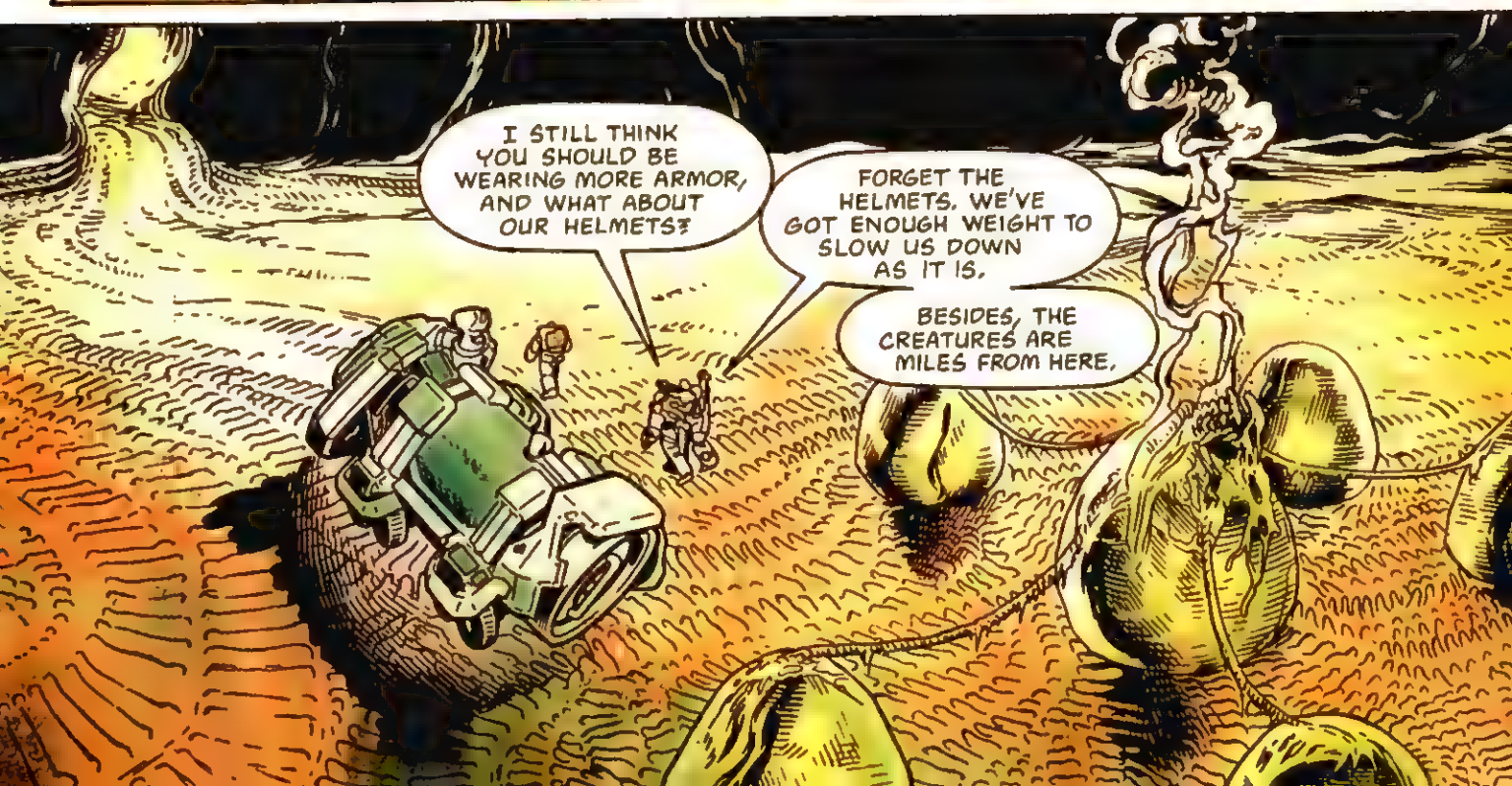

THE UNDER-PLATING ON THIS ARMOR IS DESIGNED TO WITHSTAND SEVERE CONCUSSIONS.
STILL, YOU'RE PROBABLY RIGHT ABOUT THAT HIP. YOU'RE GOING TO NEED SOME HELP.

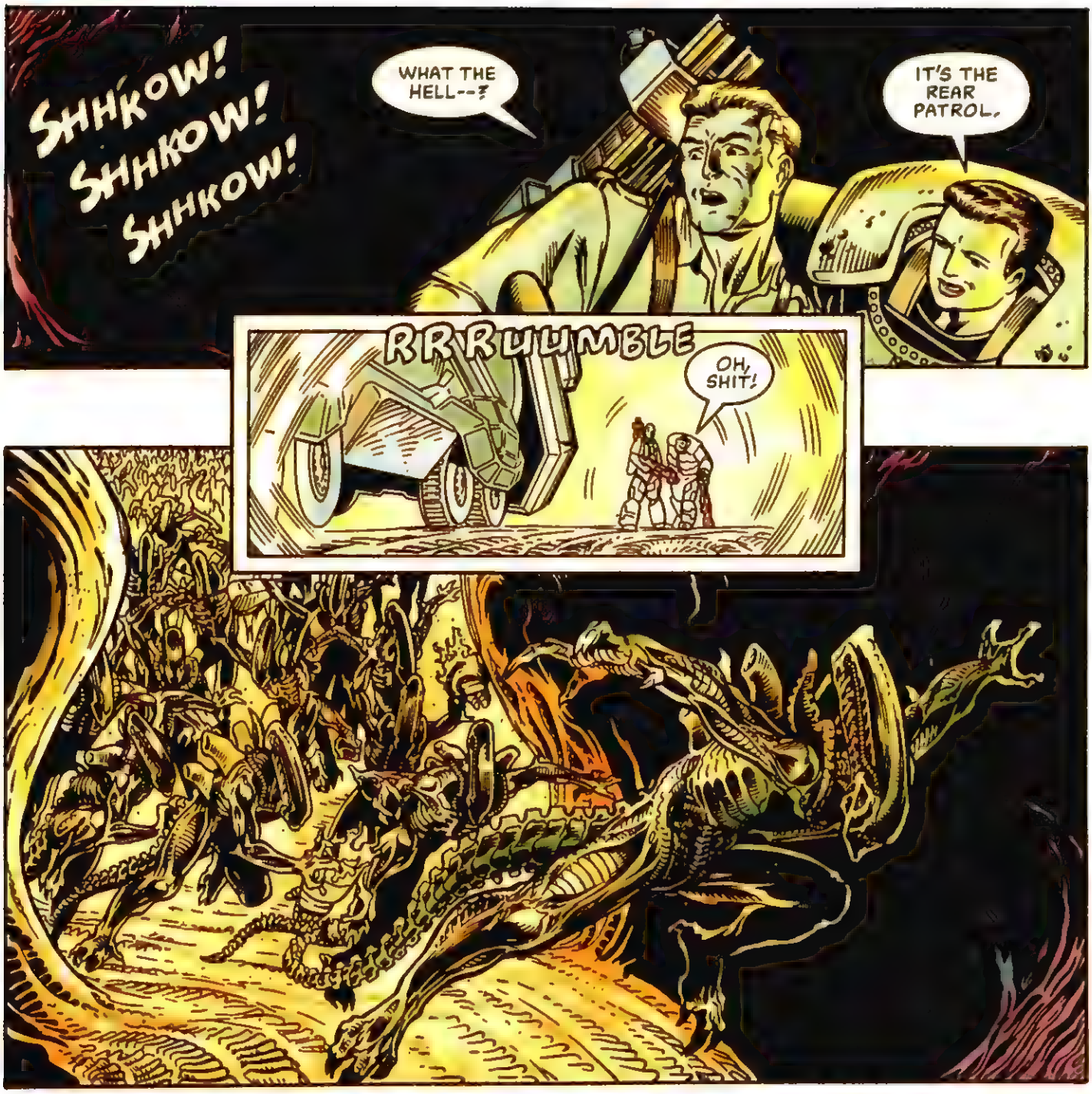

SOON.
SPIES, RENEGADES, AND HIT MEN. I THINK IT'S TIME I DROPPED OUT OF THE CORPORATE WORLD.
BUT NOT BEFORE WE TAKE THIS LOAD HOME, RIGHT?

YOU SAID IT YOURSELF THIS MORNING, MAJOR. TOO MANY HAVE DIED FOR US TO LEAVE IT ALL BEHIND NOW.

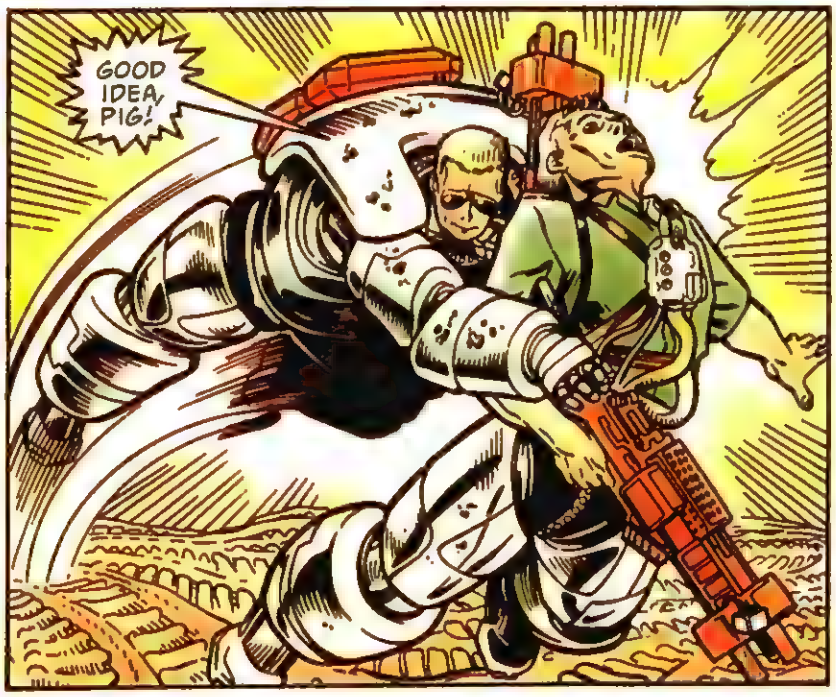

YEAH, WHATEVER.
I GUESS THIS MAKES YOU FEEL PRETTY GOOD-- BEING THE HERO, SAVING MY LIFE.
JUST RETURNING THE FAVOR, MAJOR.


PLEASE ACTIVATE THE DRONE, MAJOR. IT'S SET TO FOLLOW US. WHEN WE HIT OPEN AIR, IT'LL HOME IN ON THE LANDER.
HENRIKSEN, YOU LEAD THE WAY.

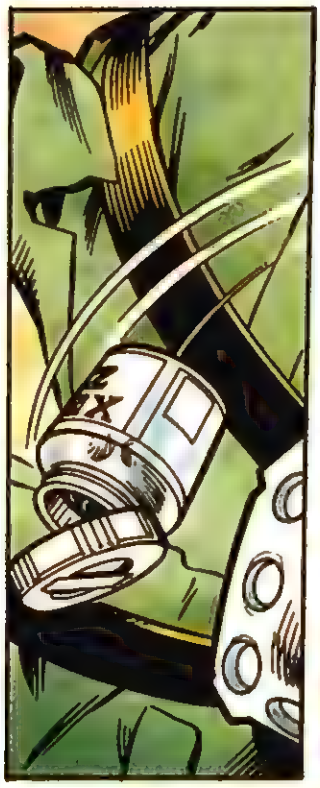

I STILL THINK YOU SHOULD BE WEARING MORE ARMOR, AND WHAT ABOUT OUR HELMETS?
FORGET THE HELMETS. WE'VE GOT ENOUGH WEIGHT TO SLOW US DOWN AS IT IS.
BESIDES, THE CREATURES ARE MILES FROM HERE.


SHHKOW!
SHHKOW!
SHHKOW!
WHAT THE HELL--?
IT'S THE REAR PATROL.
RRRUUMBLE
OH, SHIT!

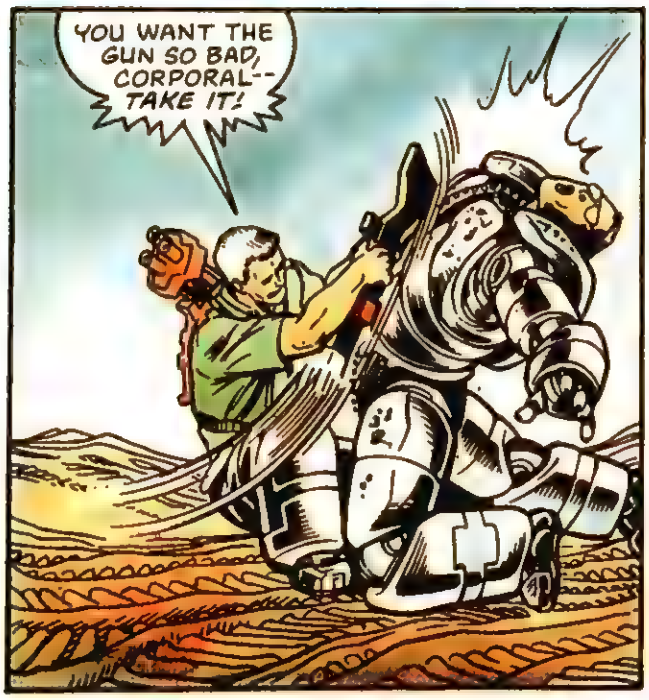
DON'T SAY A WORD, MAJOR! JUST START LOBBING GRENADES AT THE NEAREST WALL.
WE'RE GONNA HAVE TO BLAST OUR WAY OUT OF HERE!


GOOD IDEA, PIG!

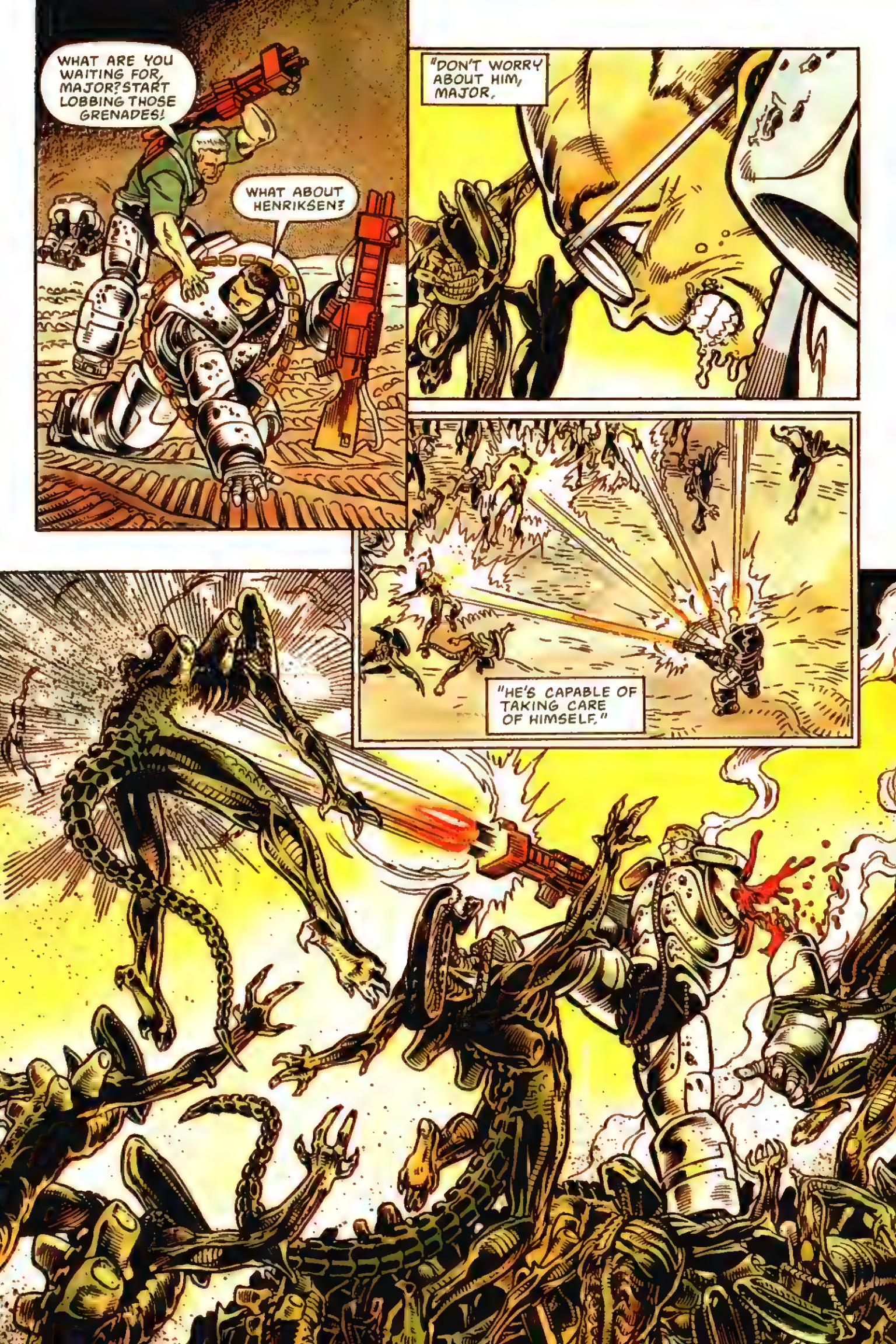
I'M GONNA MAKE IT OUT OF HERE, GRANT. I'M GOING TO BE THE ONLY ONE WHO DOES!
FOR CHRISSAKES, CORPORAL, THEY'RE ALMOST ON TOP OF US!

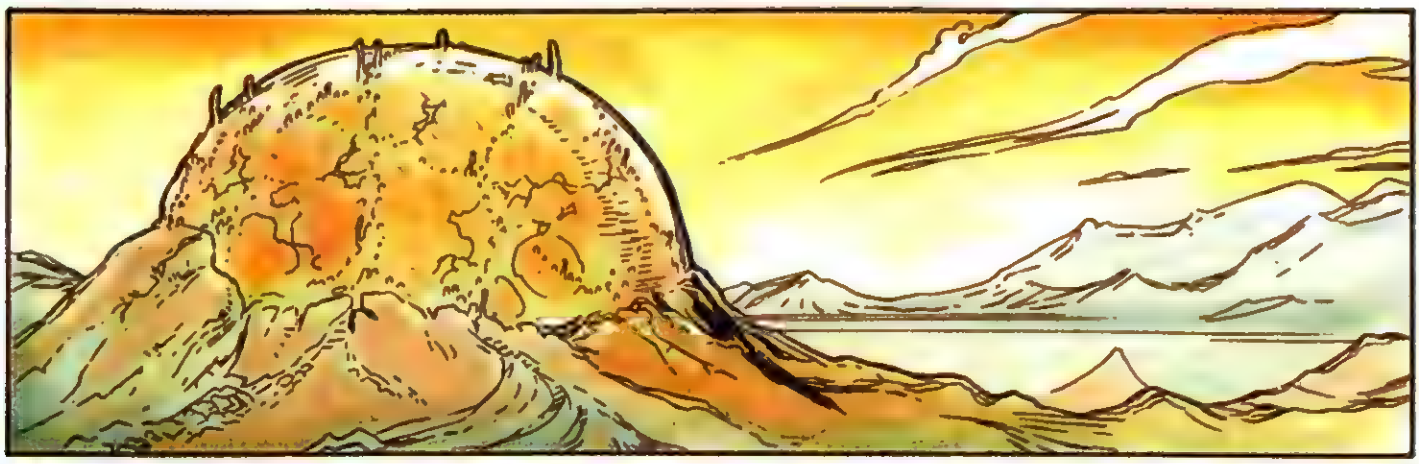


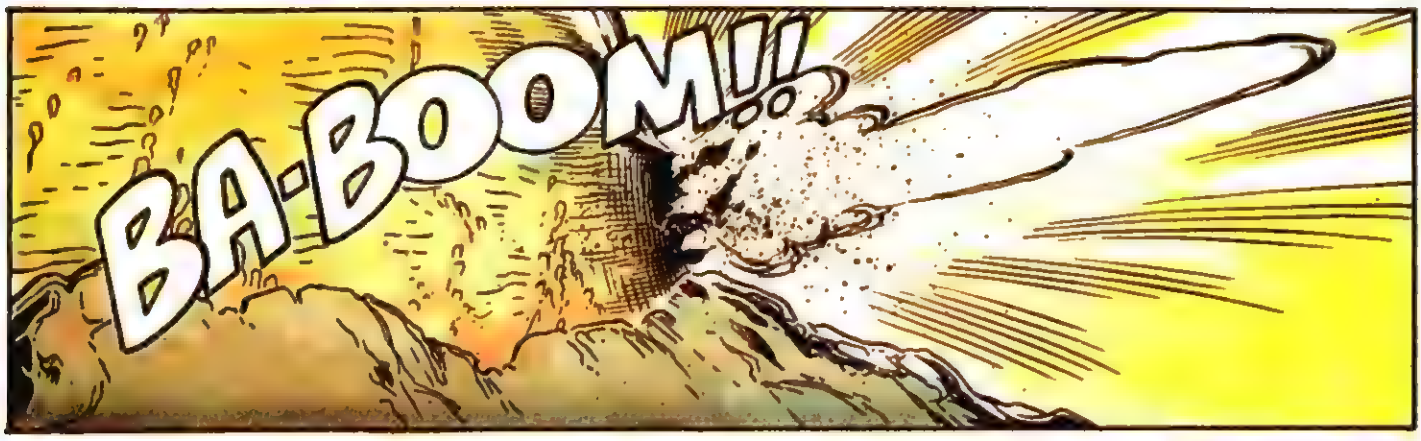
XENO ZIP
HELL, YOU THINK YOU'VE GOT TROUBLE NOW--
YOU SHOULD SEE WHAT HAPPENS WHEN I TAKE ONE OF THOSE.
WHAP

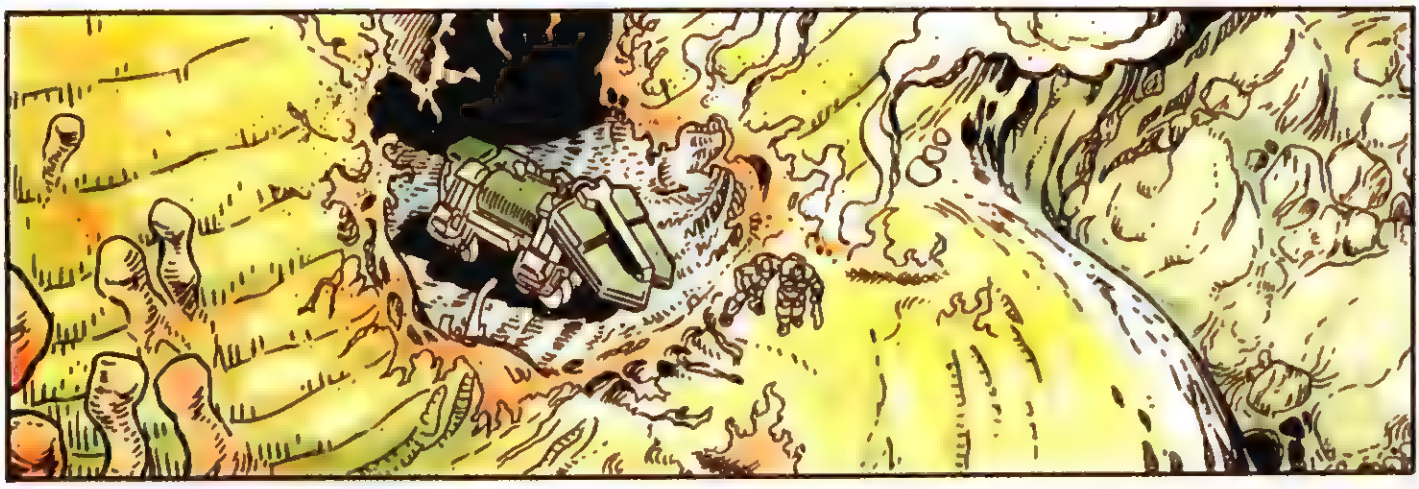

YOU WANT THE GUN SO BAD, CORPORAL-- TAKE IT!

AND HERE'S A SPECIAL BONUS!

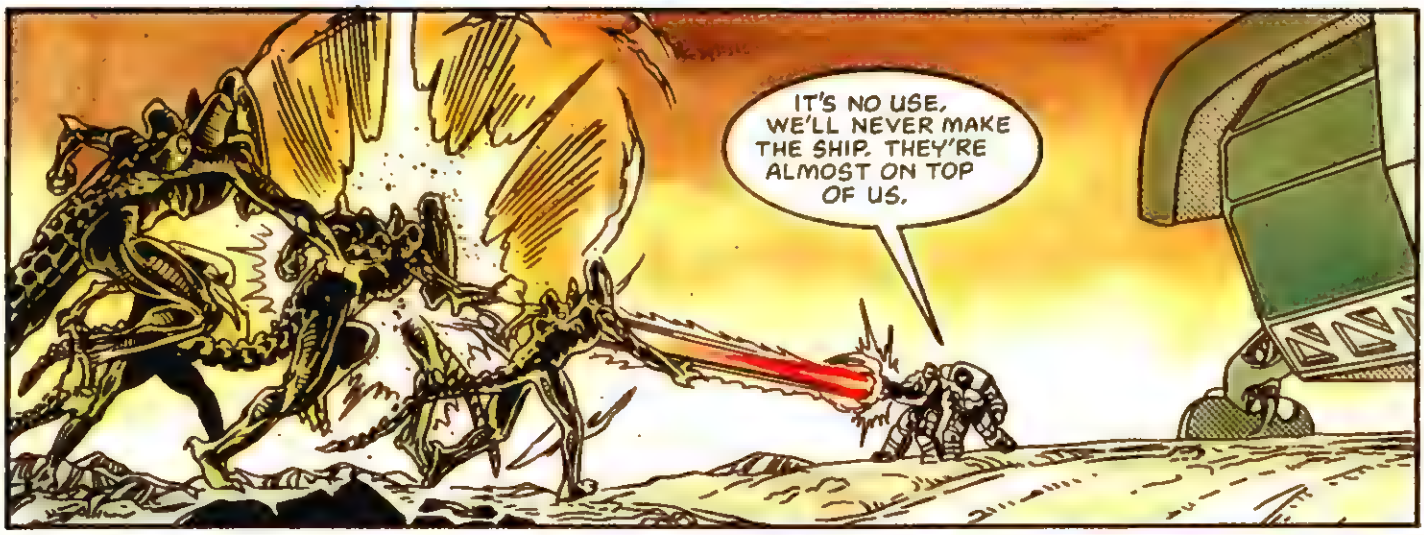

WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR, MAJOR? START LOBBING THOSE GRENADES!
WHAT ABOUT HENRIKSEN?
"DON'T WORRY ABOUT HIM, MAJOR,
"HE'S CAPABLE OF TAKING CARE OF HIMSELF."



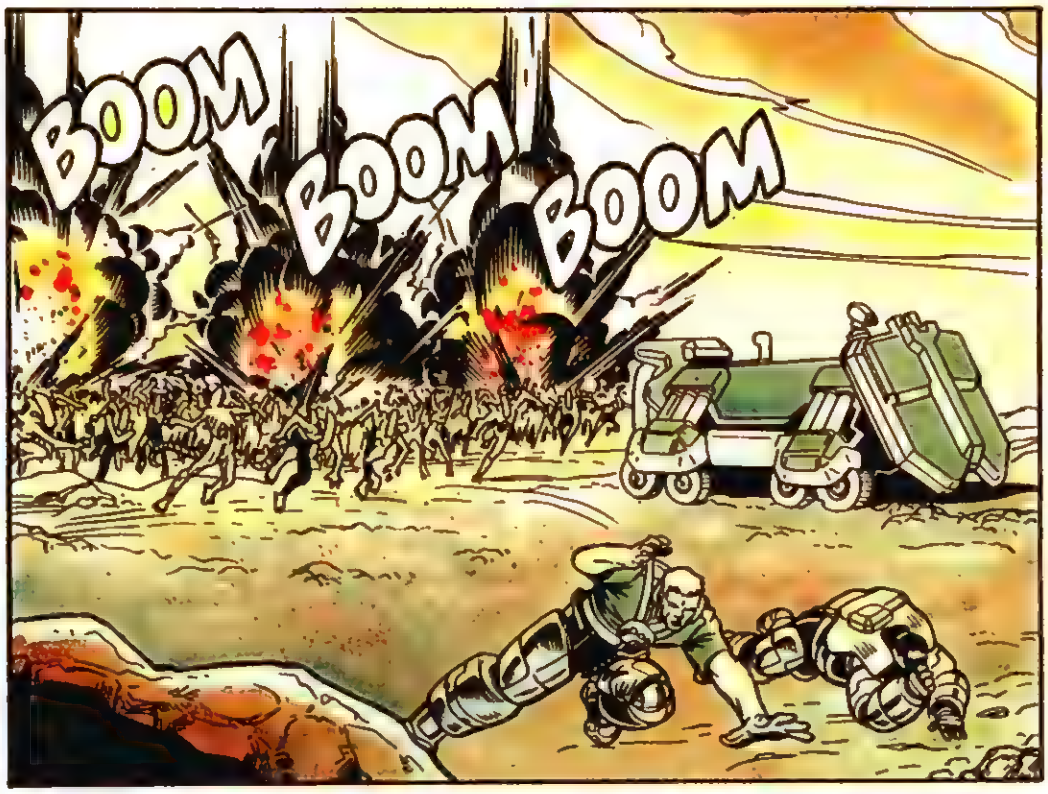

BA-BOOM!!

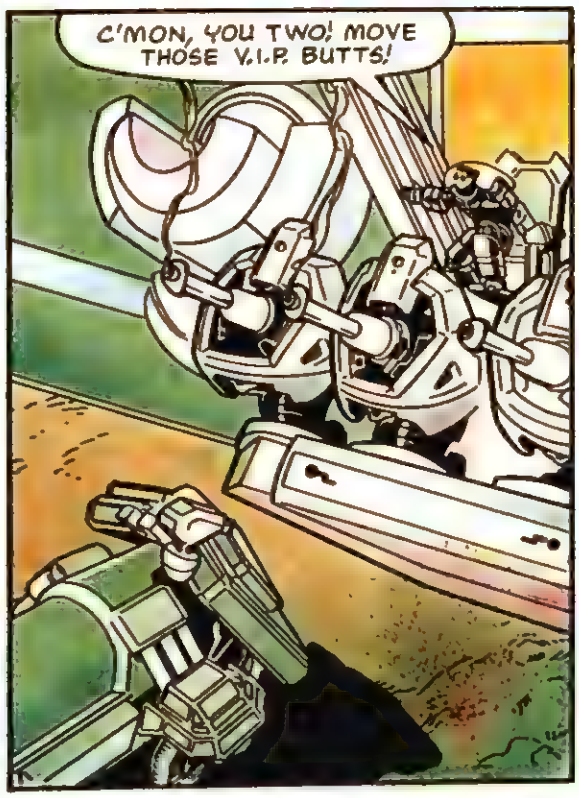


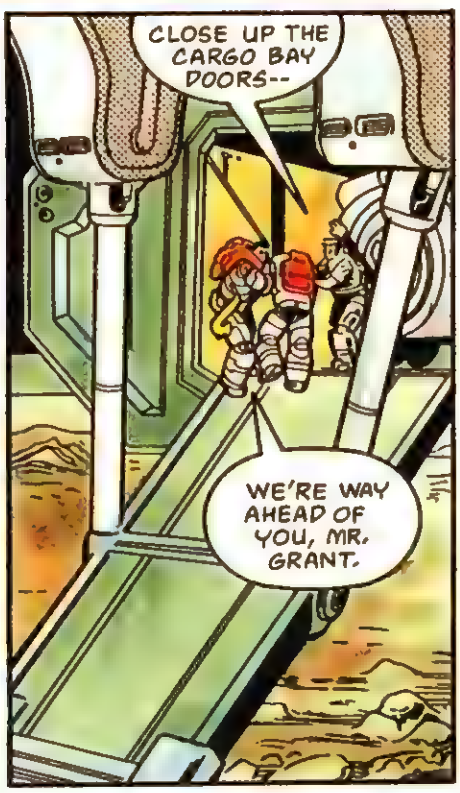
O'CONNOR, DROP ALL WALLS OF THE PERIMETER AND TELL CAPTAIN NASH TO START THE ENGINES!
PREPARE FOR AN IMMEDIATE EMERGENCY LIFTOFF!


IT'S NO USE. WE'LL NEVER MAKE THE SHIP. THEY'RE ALMOST ON TOP OF US.

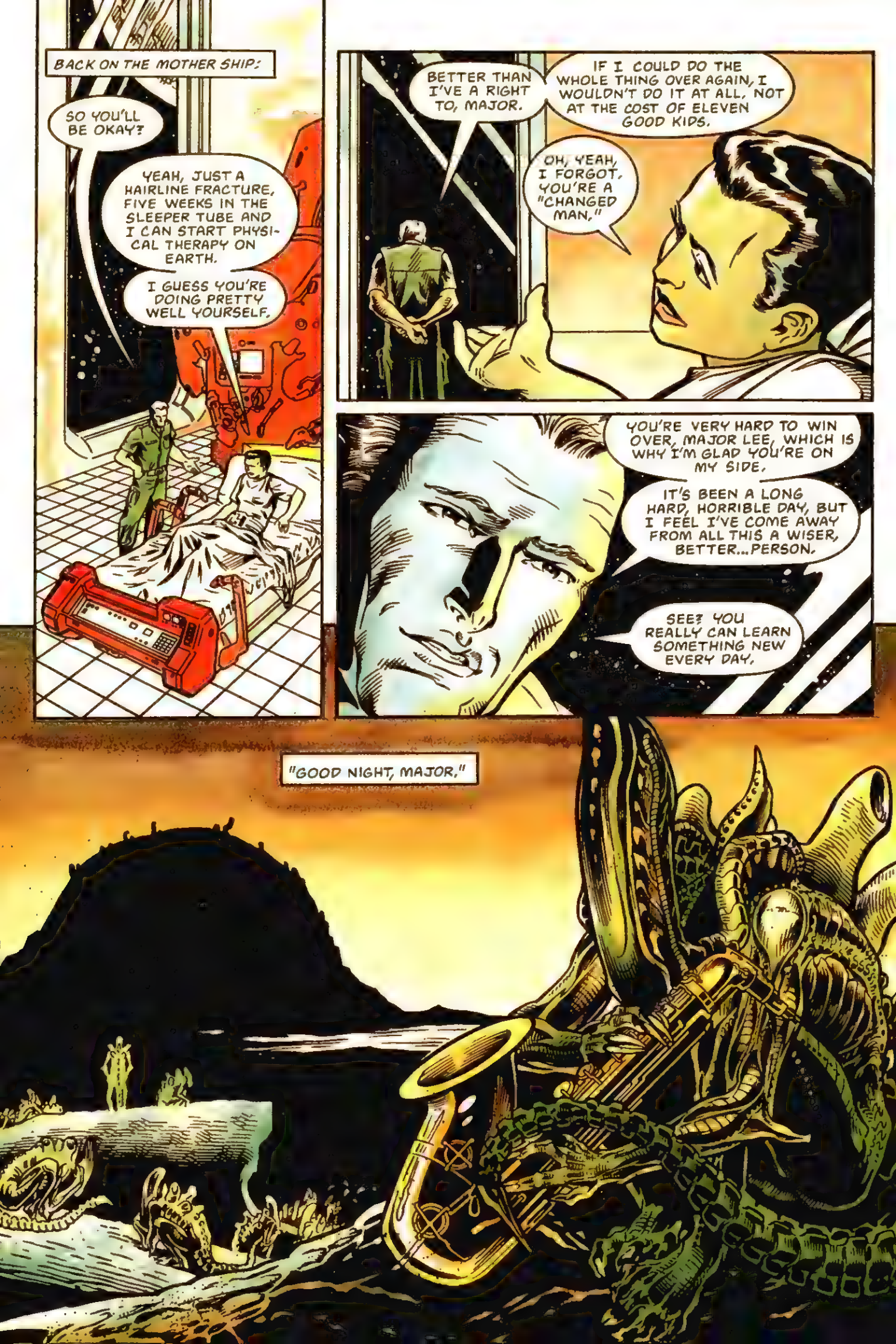
YOU KNOW WHAT I HATE ABOUT YOU, MAJOR?
YOU'RE ALWAYS RIGHT.


BOOM
BOOM
BOOM


C'MON, YOU TWO! MOVE THOSE V.I.P. BUTTS!


CLOSE UP THE CARGO BAY DOORS--
WE'RE WAY AHEAD OF YOU, MR. GRANT.

CLANK!
NO, DON'T SHOOT! THE BLOOD WILL PERFORATE THE DOOR.
CAN'T PLAY THE DAMN THING ANYWAY.
BONK
RRRRRR


BACK ON THE MOTHER SHIP:
SO YOU'LL BE OKAY?
YEAH, JUST A HAIRLINE FRACTURE, FIVE WEEKS IN THE SLEEPER TUBE AND I CAN START PHYSICAL THERAPY ON EARTH.
I GUESS YOU'RE DOING PRETTY WELL YOURSELF.
BETTER THAN I'VE A RIGHT TO, MAJOR.
IF I COULD DO THE WHOLE THING OVER AGAIN, I WOULDN'T DO IT AT ALL, NOT AT THE COST OF ELEVEN GOOD KIDS.
OH, YEAH, I FORGOT. YOU'RE A "CHANGED MAN."
YOU'RE VERY HARD TO WIN OVER, MAJOR LEE, WHICH IS WHY I'M GLAD YOU'RE ON MY SIDE.
IT'S BEEN A LONG HARD, HORRIBLE DAY, BUT I FEEL I'VE COME AWAY FROM ALL THIS A WISER, BETTER...PERSON.
SEE? YOU REALLY CAN LEARN SOMETHING NEW EVERY DAY.
"GOOD NIGHT, MAJOR."

HARVEST

script
JERRY PROSSER

art
KELLEY JONES

color
LES DORSCHEID

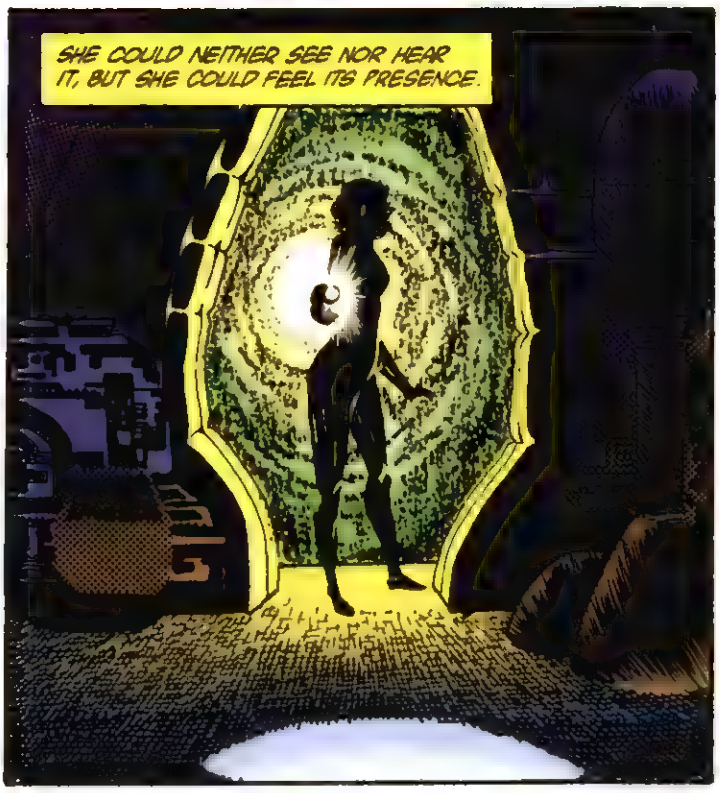
lettering
CLEM ROBINS

title illustration
JOHN BOLTON

SHE WAS USED TO THE DARK. IT HELD NO SURPRISES.
RIPPLES OF DARKNESS PUSHED AGAINST HER, INVISIBLE STONES DROPPED INTO A POOL OF INK.
SHE WASN'T ALONE.

SILENCE, COMPANION TO DARKNESS, WAS NOT HER FRIEND.
SHE FELT AROUND HER THE EMPTINESS OF THE VACUUM...THE GRAVE.
27

SHE FOUND HERSELF WHISPERING TO FILL THE SILENCE.
WHERE ARE YOU? WHERE ARE YOU?

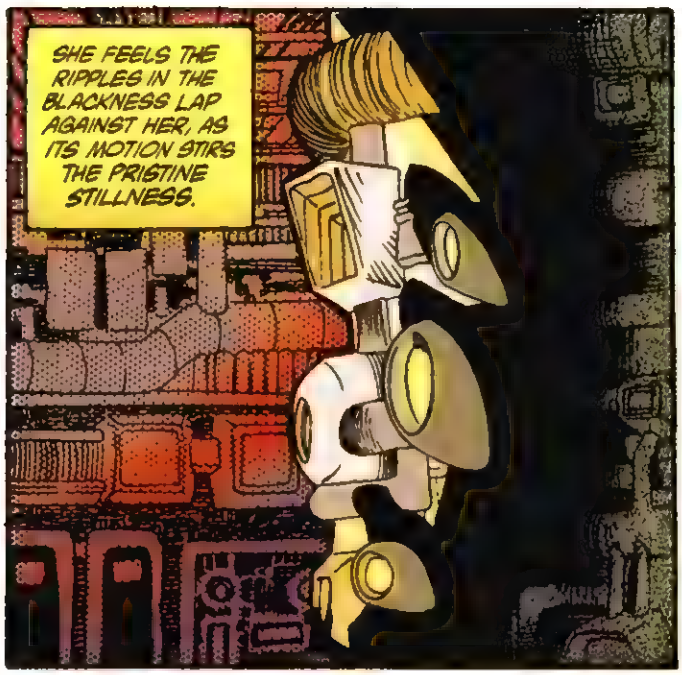

SHE COULD NEITHER SEE NOR HEAR IT, BUT SHE COULD FEEL ITS PRESENCE.

NOW SHE CURSED BOTH LIGHT AND SOUND.
THE EYELESS FACE CARED NOTHING FOR SUCH SPECIALIZED PERCEPTIONS.
IT USED THE OLD SENSES...VIBRATION, ELECTRICITY, FEAR.
SSSSSSSSSSSSSSS
NO!

YOU DON'T HAVE ME YET.
NOT YET.
GET THROUGH THAT.

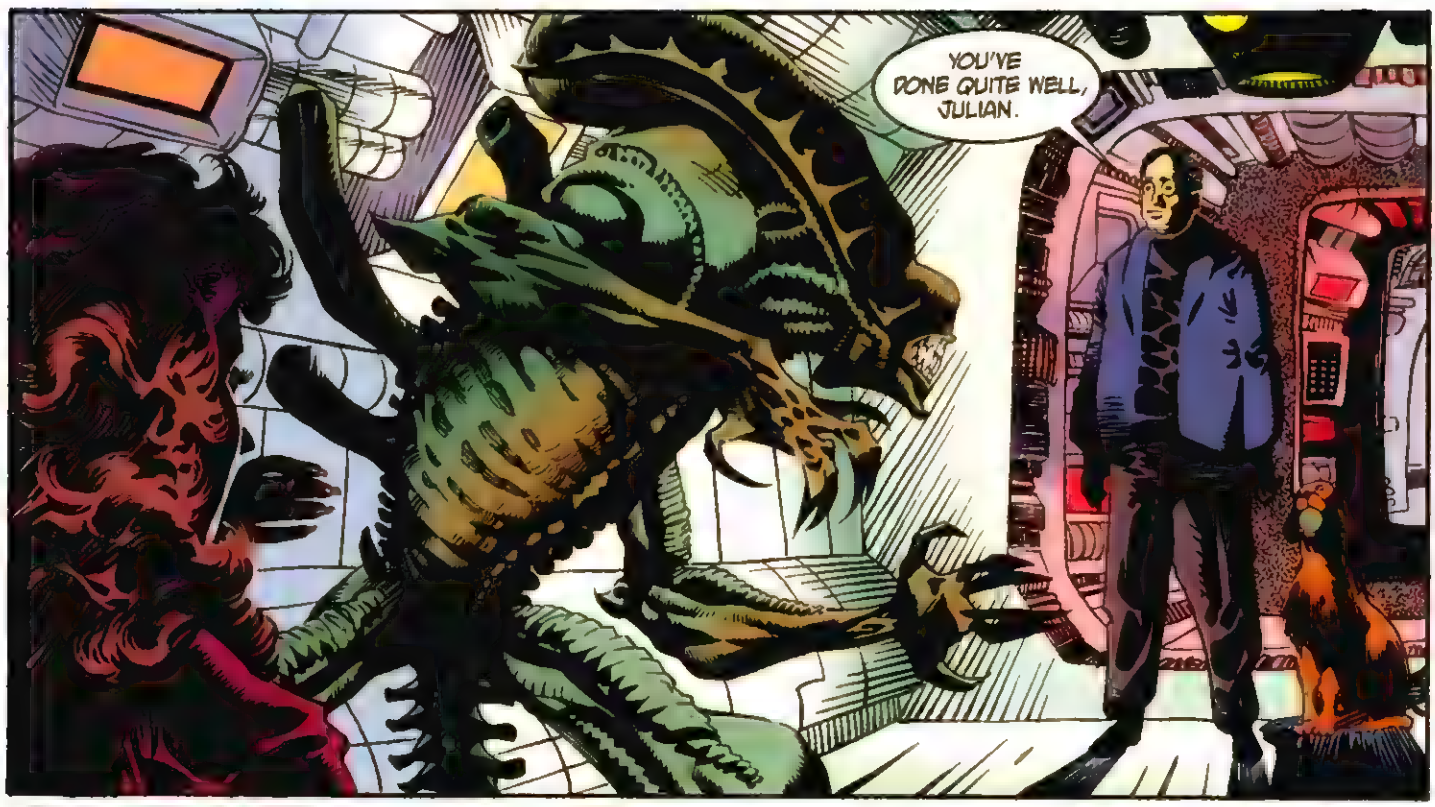
HERE?

DAMN! BLIND ALLEY.
BACKTRACK.


SHE FEELS THE RIPPLES IN THE BLACKNESS LAP AGAINST HER, AS ITS MOTION STIRS THE PRISTINE STILLNESS.

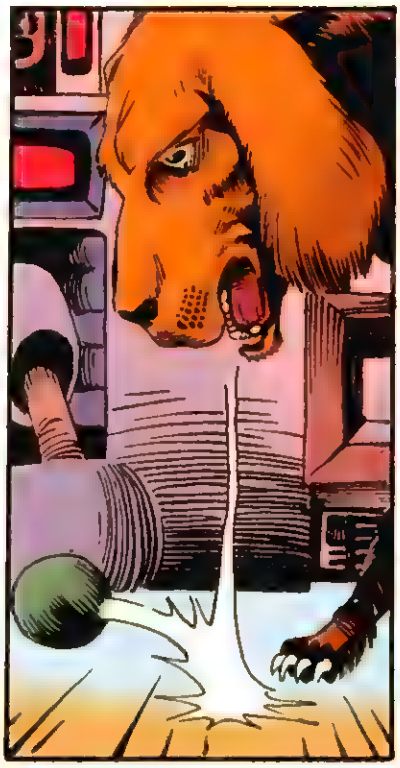
SHE WONDERS HOW IT CAN MOVE SO QUICKLY.

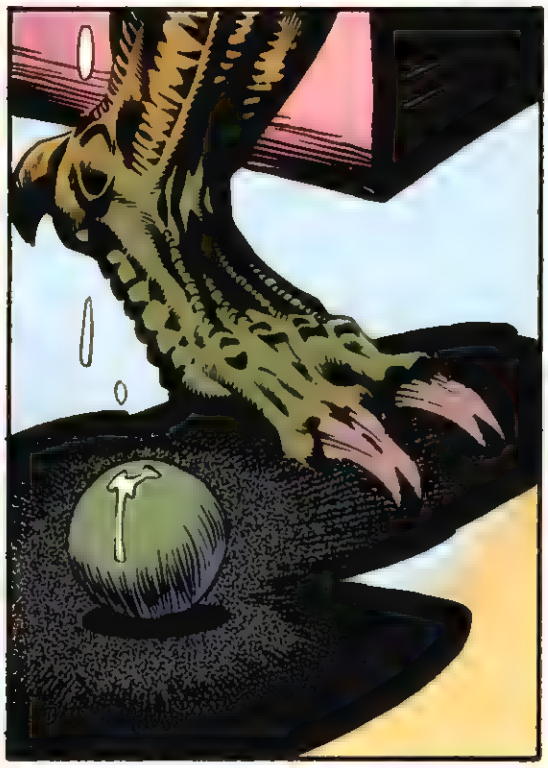
C'MON ..LET'S GO.
OOH, I HATE THIS PART...
PRIORITY OVERRIDE. CODE MYRMIDON.
CANCEL PREDATION FUNCTIONS. RETURN TO STANDARD PROGRAM.

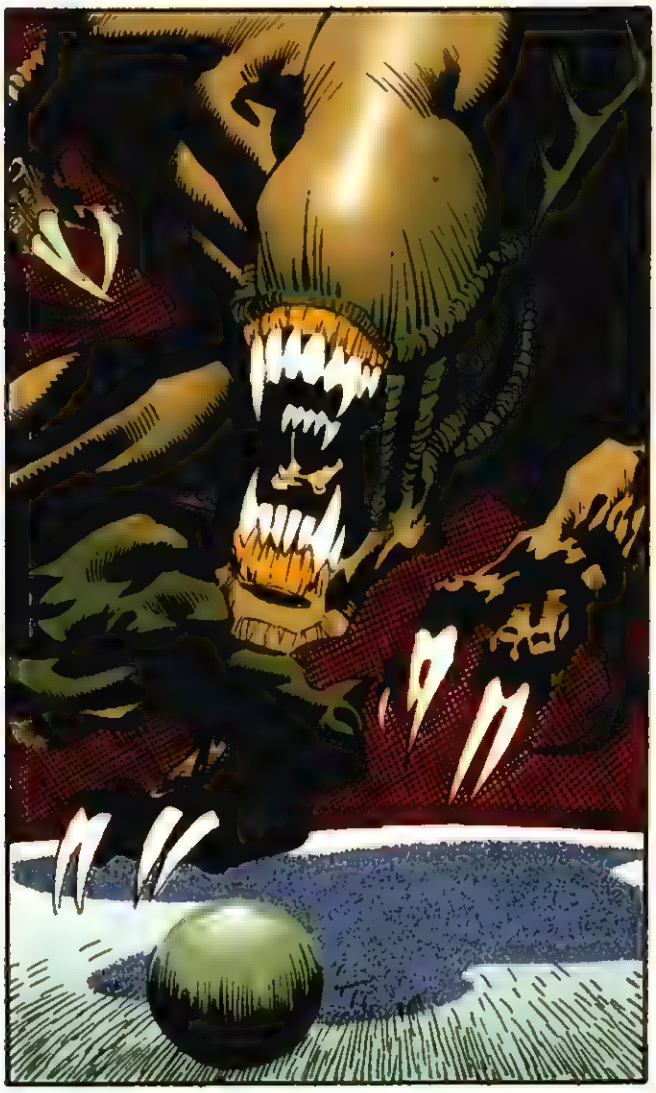

YOU'VE DONE QUITE WELL, JULIAN.

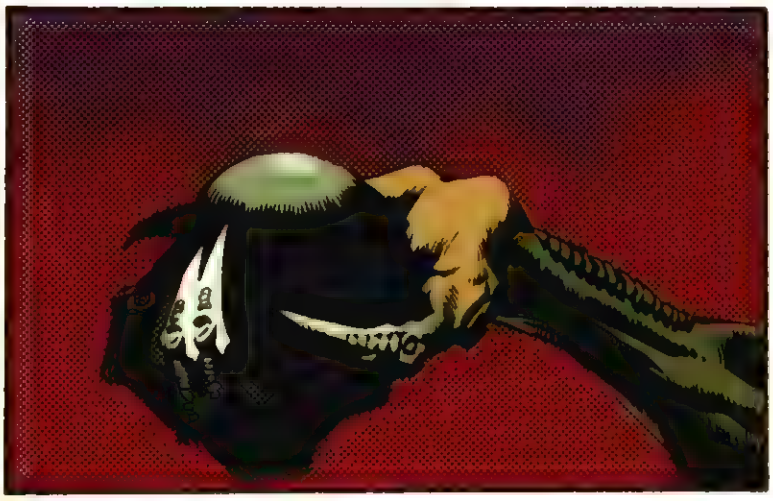
THAT'S A GOOD FIFTEEN SECONDS LONGER THAN YESTERDAY.

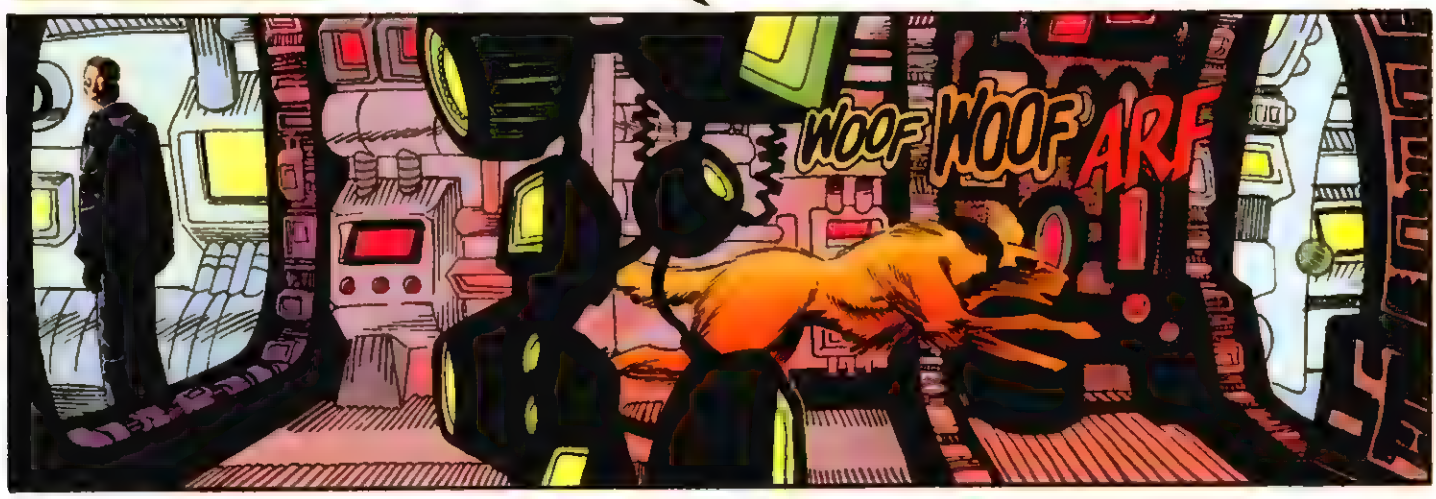
SOMETIME SOON --GIVEN ENOUGH PRACTICE--YOU MIGHT BE ABLE TO LAST OVER THREE MINUTES.










WOOF
WOOF
ARF

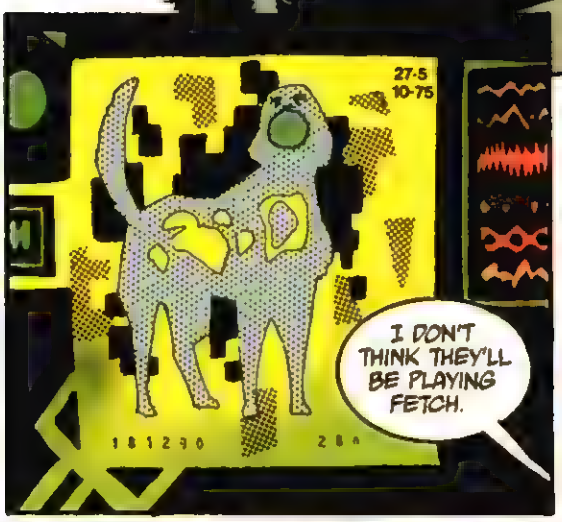
SSSSSS

REPORT TO THE LAB AT 15:30. I WANT TO DOWNLOAD AND REVIEW.
AND KEEP MAC QUIET. THE CREW IS STILL IN HYPERSLEEP.

YES, DOCTOR MAYAKOVSKY.

JESUS, STAN. HE KEEPS GETTING BETTER. IT'S ALL I CAN DO TO STAY AHEAD OF HIM ANYMORE.
XL1 DOES SEEM TO HAVE ALL THE CHARACTERISTICS WE'RE LOOKING FOR.

WHAT WILL TEN THOUSAND OF HIM BE LIKE?


27-5
10-75
I DON'T THINK THEY'LL BE PLAYING FETCH.

THEY CAN BE PLAYING JAI ALAI FOR ALL I CARE-- JUST AS LONG AS WE DON'T GET CLOSE TO ANY.

YOUR PLAN'S A GOOD ONE. WE'LL GET WHAT WE'VE COME FOR. I DON'T HAVE MUCH CHOICE.
I THINK I'LL GO BACK TO MY CABIN AND REST.

TAKE IT EASY, STAN. THERE WILL BE MORE OF IT THERE THAN YOU CAN IMAGINE...ENOUGH TO LAST FOREVER.

DID YOU ENJOY THE SHOW, ARI?

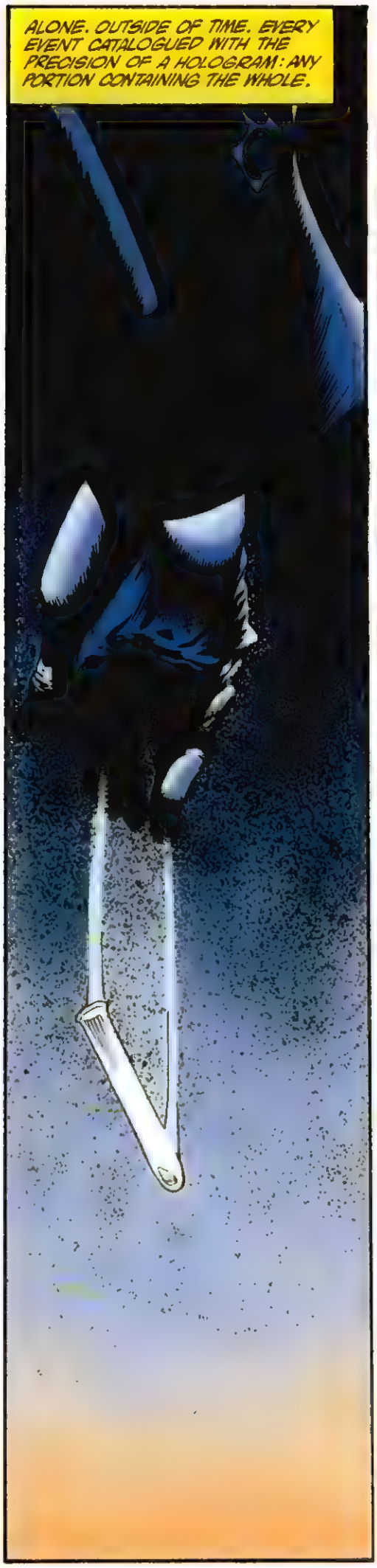
SYMPTOMS SEEM TO BE COMING CLOSER TOGETHER.

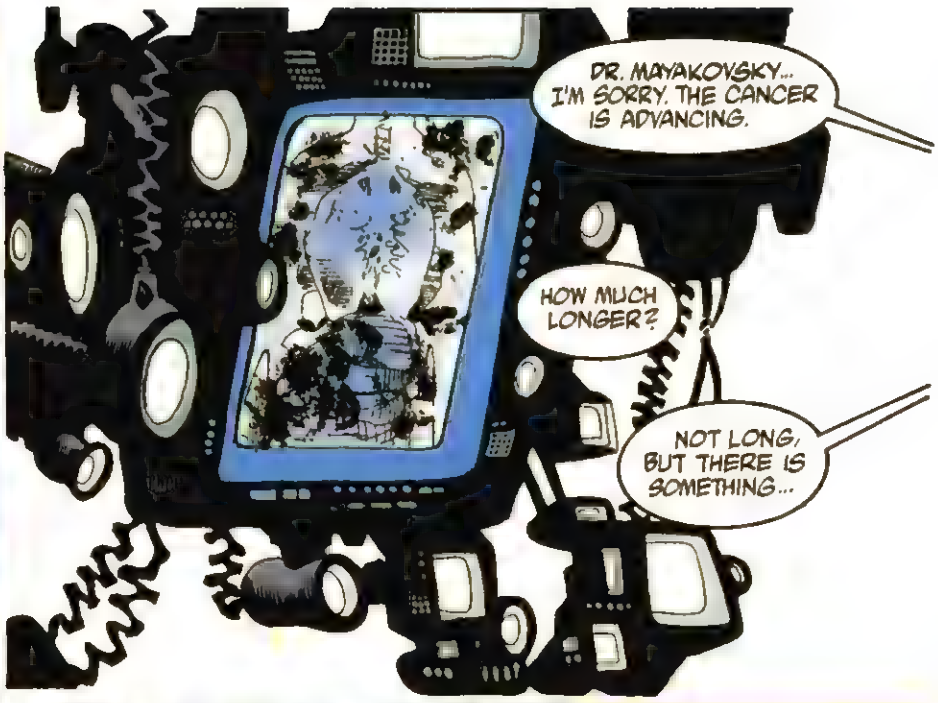
SO LITTLE LEFT. SO LITTLE TIME.

THE MEMORIES BEGIN WITH A WARM TINGLE AT THE BACK OF HIS NECK. THE WARMTH SPREADS QUICKLY THROUGH BOTH HIS BODY AND PSYCHE.

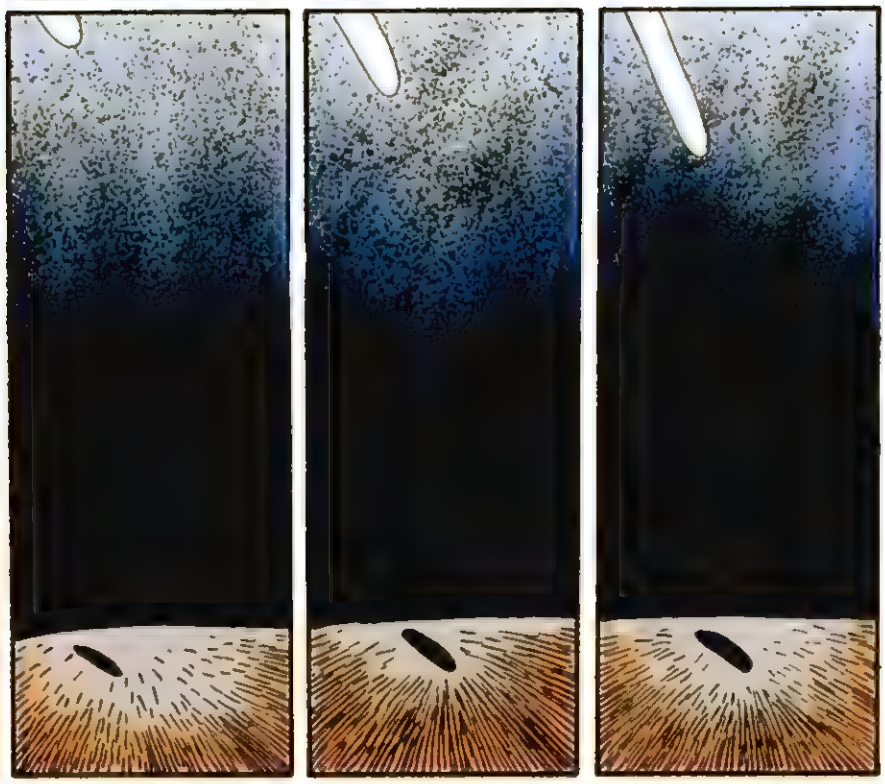
HE FLIPS THROUGH HIS MEMORIES LIKE THE PAGES OF A WELL-WORN BOOK UNTIL HE FINDS WHAT HE'S LOOKING FOR.

AS TIME...TURNS.. BLUE..

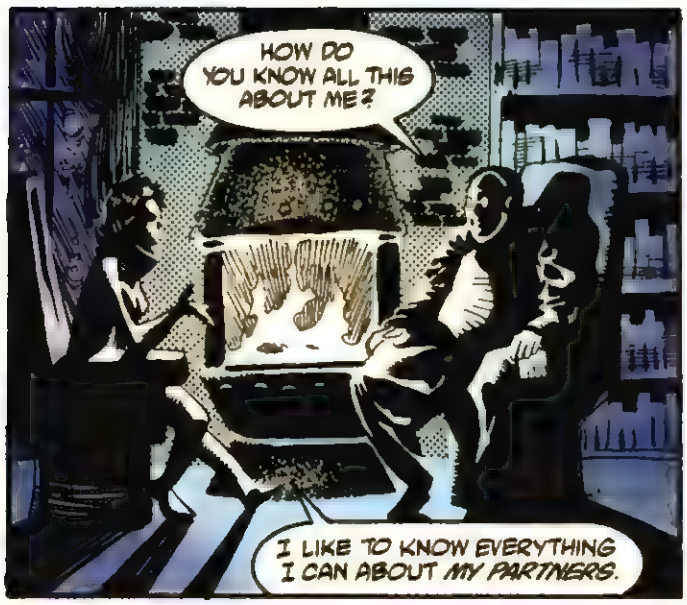

ALONE. OUTSIDE OF TIME. EVERY EVENT CATALOGUED WITH THE PRECISION OF A HOLOGRAM: ANY PORTION CONTAINING THE WHOLE.


DR. MAYAKOVSKY... I'M SORRY. THE CANCER IS ADVANCING.
HOW MUCH LONGER?
NOT LONG, BUT THERE IS SOMETHING...

A BLUE, TIMELESS SEA OF MEMORIES RISES GENTLY FROM THE SUBSTANCE IN THE VIAL. EACH HEARTBEAT LASTS A DECADE--EACH MEMORY A LIFETIME.
HE LETS THE WAVES WASH OVER HIM AND PULL HIM DEEPER.

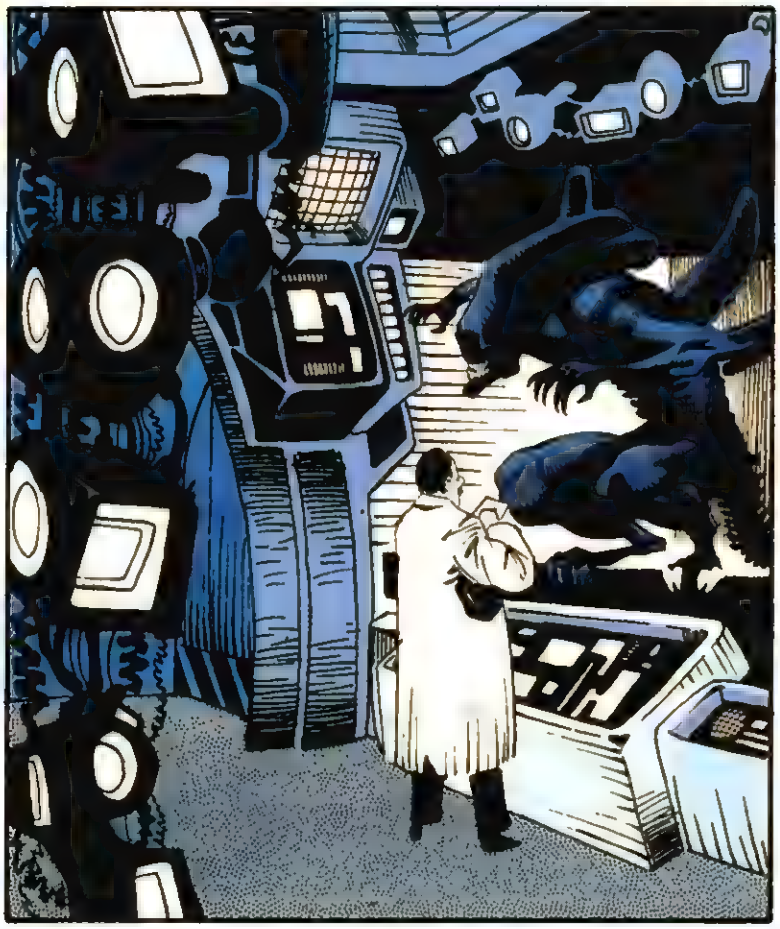


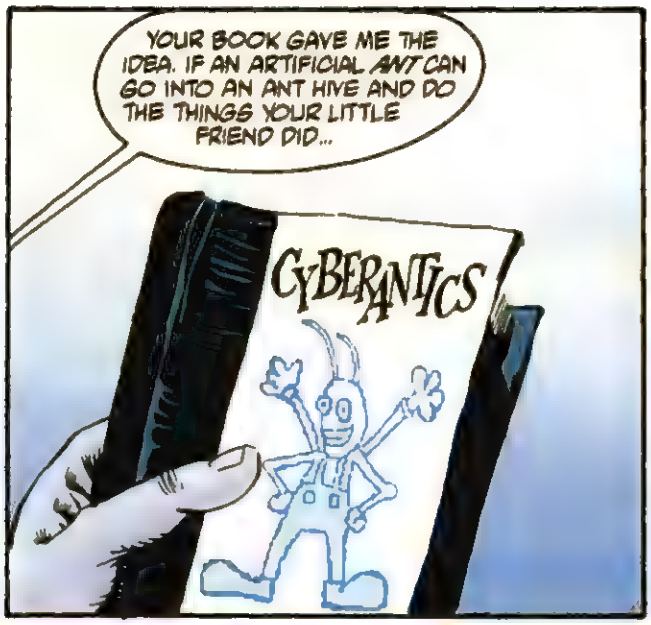
I'M SURE YOU KNOW WHAT THIS IS. IT'S NO CURE, BUT IT SHOULD RELIEVE THE SYMPTOMS. THE EFFECTS OF THE UNPROCESSED JELLY VARY WIDELY BETWEEN INDIVIDUALS. IT MIGHT BE WHAT YOU'RE LOOKING FOR.
DR. MAYAKOVSKY? MY NAME IS JULIAN LISH. MAY I COME IN? I THINK WE HAVE SOMETHING TO DISCUSS.
THE ALIEN QUEEN MOTHER'S ROYAL JELLY IS THE MOST SOUGHT-AFTER CONSCIOUSNESS-ALTERING SUBSTANCE IN EXISTENCE.
IT GIVES SOME AN INTENSE FEELING OF WELL-BEING AND COMPETENCE. OTHERS EXPERIENCE LEVELS OF THEIR OWN BEING NOT NORMALLY PERCEIVED. STILL OTHERS HAVE AN ORGASM THAT SEEMS TO GO ON FOREVER.
I'M SURE YOU'RE AWARE OF XENO-ZIP. YOU NEED THIS --THE RAW STUFF.


HOW DO YOU KNOW ALL THIS ABOUT ME?
I LIKE TO KNOW EVERYTHING I CAN ABOUT MY PARTNERS.

"I KNOW YOU DON'T LIKE THOSE PEOPLE...THE ONES YOU'RE FORCED TO DEAL WITH.
"I KNOW YOU'RE RUNNING OUT OF MONEY...AND TIME."

HE REMEMBERS EVERYTHING ABOUT THAT NIGHT...HER EYES, HER SMILE, THE WAY HE FELT, AND THE PLAN. IT SEEMS TO BE HAPPENING ALL OVER AGAIN...AND AGAIN...
HE TOUCHES ON EACH FROZEN MOMENT WITH HER AND HOLDS IT. THE SUBLIME PERFECTION OF MEMORY.
THE BEST PLACE TO GET HONEY IS FROM BEES.

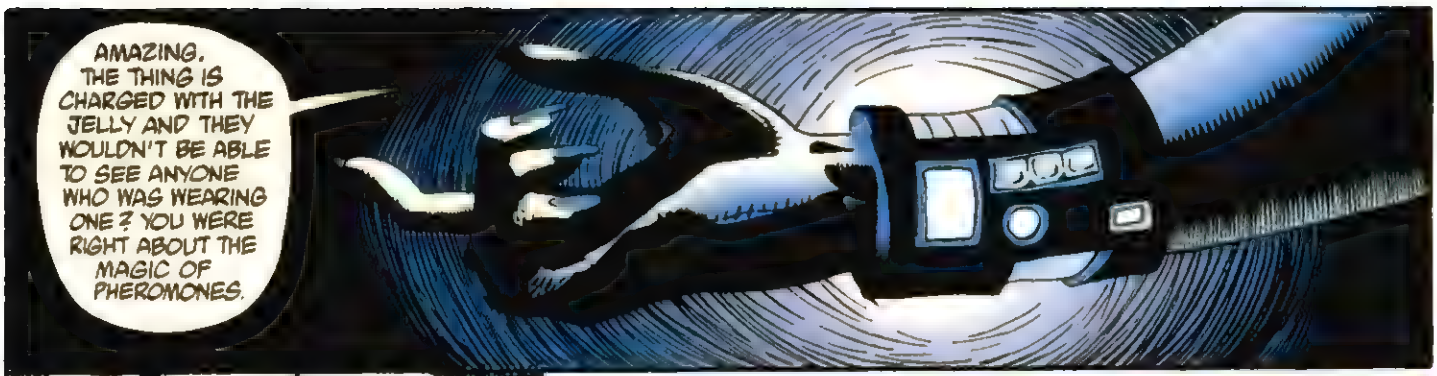



YOUR BOOK GAVE ME THE IDEA. IF AN ARTIFICIAL ANT CAN GO INTO AN ANT HIVE AND DO THE THINGS YOUR LITTLE FRIEND DID...
CYBERANTICS

WHY CAN'T AN ARTIFICIAL ALIEN PENETRATE THEIR SOCIETY?

"WE BUILD ANDROIDS THAT WE CAN BARELY TELL FROM HUMANS. A BIG ANT SHOULD BE EASY TO FOOL. WE'LL NEVER EVEN HAVE TO GET CLOSE TO A REAL ONE.
"THINK OF WHAT WE'LL BE ABLE TO GET --WHAT YOU'LL BE ABLE TO LEARN."

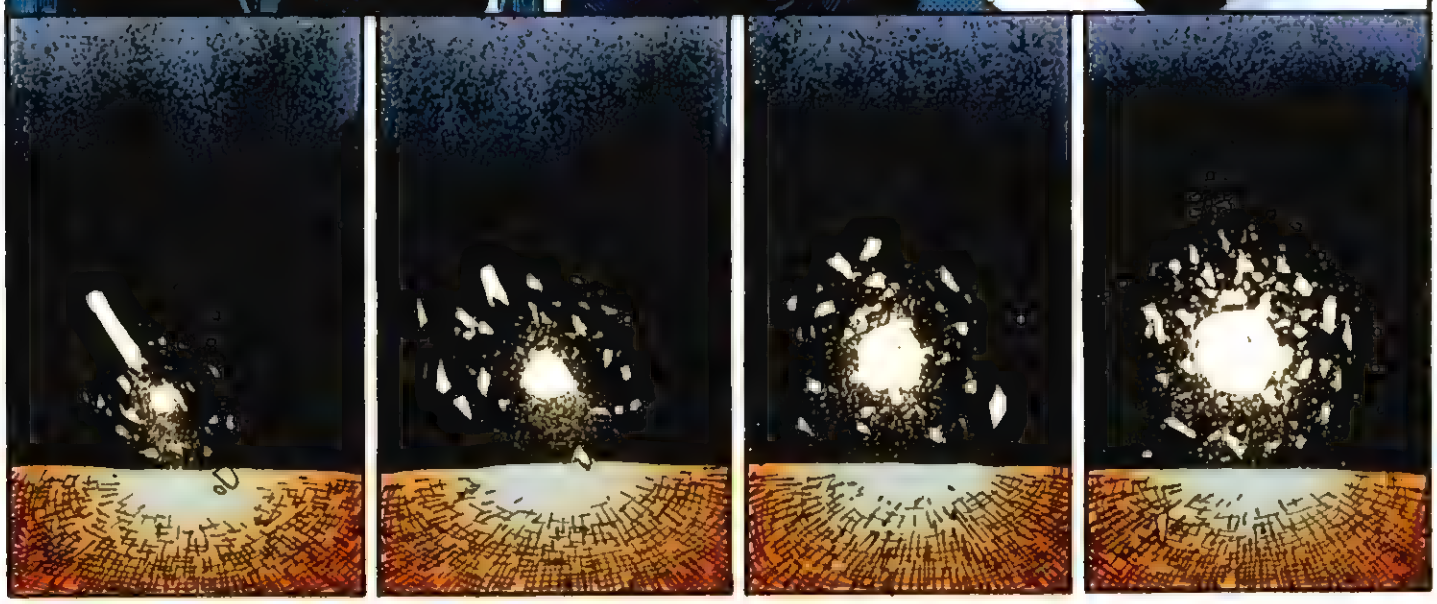
I'VE BEEN A THIEF FOR A LONG TIME, STAN. I KNOW WHEN TO TAKE A RISK. THIS IS IT.
I WAS ABLE TO CONVINCE A BIO-NATIONAL EXECUTIVE NOT TO TAKE CERTAIN SECRETS TO HIS GRAVE. I KNOW WHERE IT IS, STAN...A MOUNTAIN OF GOLD!


AMAZING. THE THING IS CHARGED WITH THE JELLY AND THEY WOULDN'T BE ABLE TO SEE ANYONE WHO WAS WEARING ONE? YOU WERE RIGHT ABOUT THE MAGIC OF PHEROMONES.

LET'S CALL HIM NORBERT, AFTER THE SCIENTIST YOU TOLD ME ABOUT.
I DON'T THINK SO.

STAN, I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO SAY... THANK YOU, I LOVE IT.
HE FEELS THE SHUDDER IN HIS CHEST ONCE MORE. IT SEEMS TO LAST LONGER THAN HIS OWN SHY ADOLESCENCE.

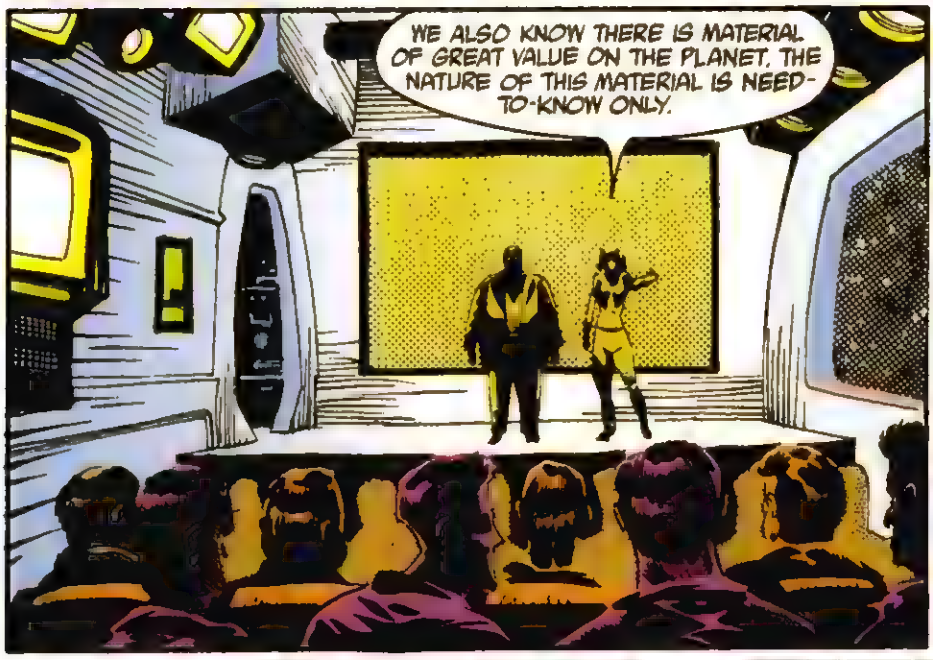
THE BLUE SUBSTANCE ENCASES HIS FEELINGS LIKE AMBER. HE CAN PULL THEM FROM HIS MEMORY AND EXAMINE THEM-- EXPERIENCE THEM-- FOREVER.



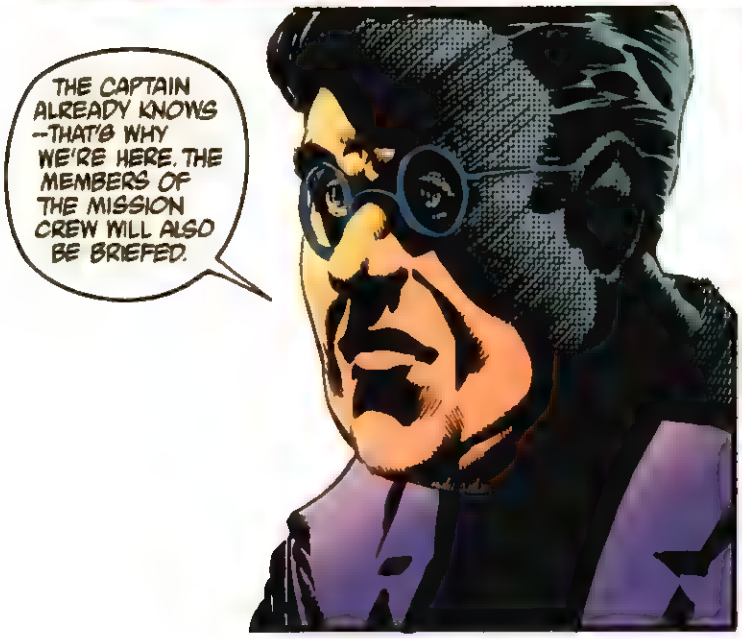
WE'VE GOT A SHIP--THE DOLOMITE--AND A CREW. I'VE WORKED WITH THE CAPTAIN BEFORE. I CAN ALMOST TASTE THAT HONEY ...AND THAT MONEY.

THE WARM TIDE OF THE OCEAN PULLS AWAY, AND HE FEELS HIMSELF EXPOSED TO THE CHILL OF TIME.

WE'VE REACHED ORBIT AROUND A PLANET MARKED ON THE CHARTS AS A6 454. IT'S SO FAR OFF THE USUAL ROUTES THAT IT HASN'T EVEN HAD A FORMAL SURVEY.
HOWEVER, FROM THE READINGS WE'VE GATHERED, WE KNOW THAT THIS PLANET DOES HAVE A BARELY BREATHABLE ATMOSPHERE, AND SEEMS TO BE CONSTANTLY BUFFETED BY STORMS.


WE ALSO KNOW THERE IS MATERIAL OF GREAT VALUE ON THE PLANET. THE NATURE OF THIS MATERIAL IS NEED-TO-KNOW ONLY.

WHO NEEDS TO KNOW?


THE CAPTAIN ALREADY KNOWS --THAT'S WHY WE'RE HERE. THE MEMBERS OF THE MISSION CREW WILL ALSO BE BRIEFED.

I'LL ALSO BE LOOKING FOR VOLUNTEERS TO--

WOOF
WOOF
DON'T MOVE! HE WON'T ATTACK UNLESS...
...PROVOKED!

NUH
NUH
NUH

PRIORITY OVERRIDE!
CODE MYRMIDON!

WE'RE GETTING SOME STRANGE SIGNALS AND CAN'T SEEM TO GET A FIX. I'M NOT SURE OF THEIR POINT OF ORIGIN, OR EVEN IF IT'S NOT SOME NATURALLY OCCURRING PHENOMENON.
BUT, GIVEN OUR LOCATION, IT COULD BE SOME SORT OF PROXIMITY ALARM.

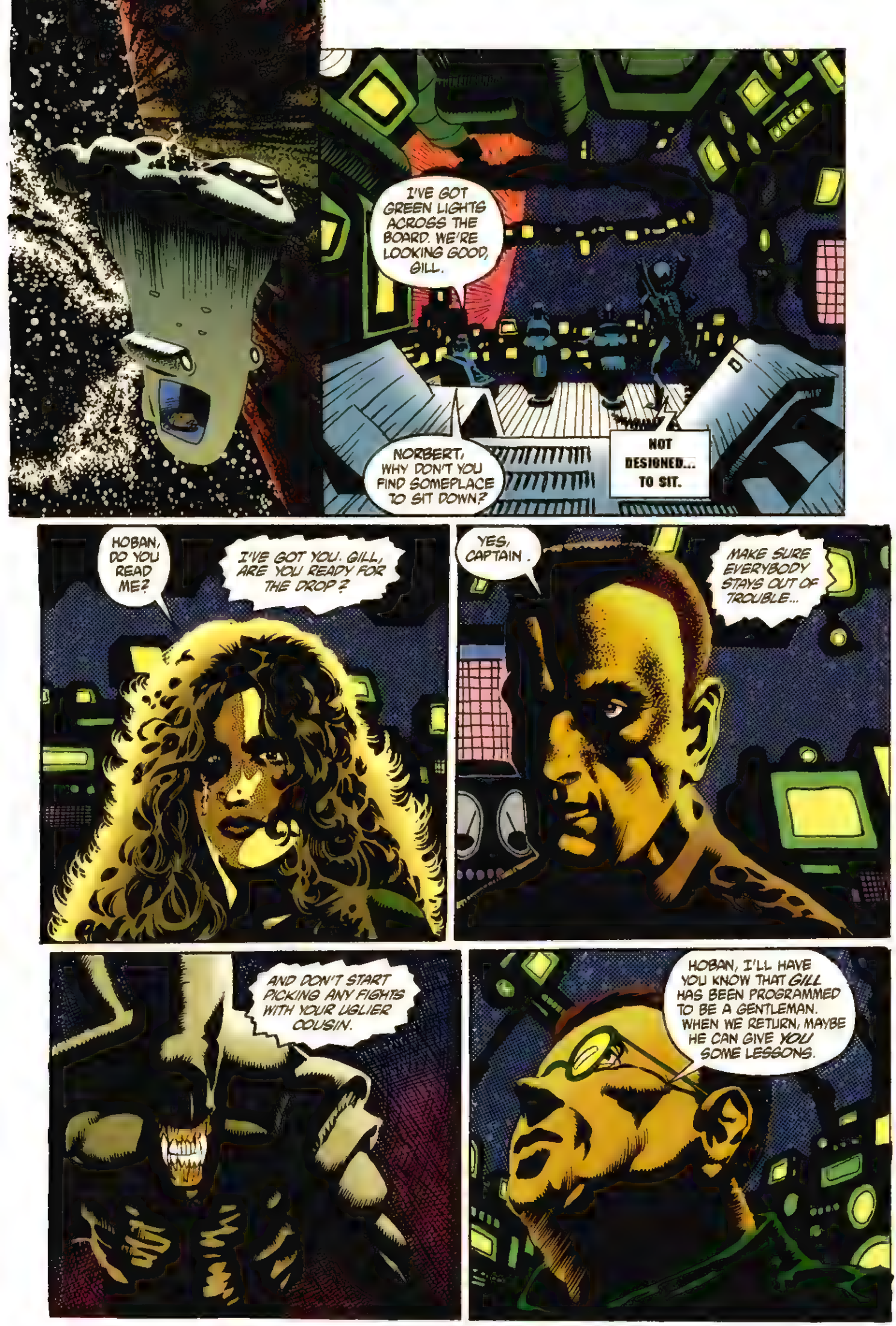
ANY OTHER SHIPS IN THE SECTOR?
NO, ALTHOUGH THERE SEEMS TO BE QUITE A BIT OF DEBRIS.
IF IT IS AN ALARM, LET'S GET GOING BEFORE ANYONE COMES. IF IT ISN'T, WHAT'S THE USE OF WAITING?

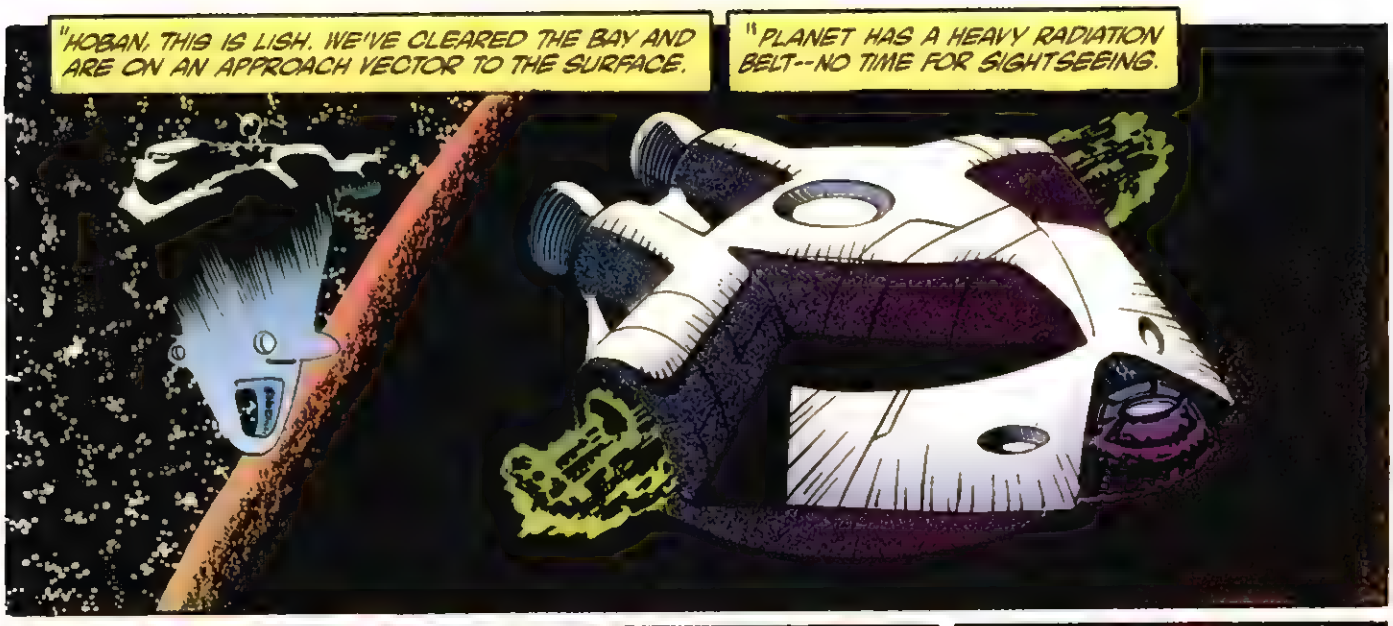
THE SOONER WE'VE RETURNED FROM THE SURFACE, THE BETTER OFF EVERYONE WILL BE.
WELL...WE'VE LOCATED YOUR SITE, AT ANY RATE. THE SURFACE IS PRETTY BARREN...

SO THEIR NEST STICKS UP LIKE A SORE THUMB.

THE WEATHER'S BAD AND LIKELY TO GET WORSE, SO WE'VE GOT ANOTHER REASON TO MOVE FAST. THE COMPUTER'S PROJECTIONS GIVE US 12 HOURS BEFORE CONDITIONS PUT THE PLATFORM AT RISK.

I'M GLAD I'M NOT GOING DOWN THERE.


I'VE GOT GREEN LIGHTS ACROSS THE BOARD. WE'RE LOOKING GOOD, GILL.
NORBERT, WHY DON'T YOU FIND SOMEPLACE TO SIT DOWN?
NOT DESIGNED... TO SIT.
HOBAN, DO YOU READ ME?
I'VE GOT YOU. GILL, ARE YOU READY FOR THE DROP?
YES, CAPTAIN.
MAKE SURE EVERYBODY STAYS OUT OF TROUBLE...
AND DON'T START PICKING ANY FIGHTS WITH YOUR UGLIER COUSIN.
HOBAN, I'LL HAVE YOU KNOW THAT GILL HAS BEEN PROGRAMMED TO BE A GENTLEMAN. WHEN WE RETURN, MAYBE HE CAN GIVE YOU SOME LESSONS.


"HOBAN, THIS IS LISH. WE'VE CLEARED THE BAY AND ARE ON AN APPROACH VECTOR TO THE SURFACE.
"PLANET HAS A HEAVY RADIATION BELT--NO TIME FOR SIGHTSEEING.

"GILL, KEEP YOUR EYES ON THE HULL IONIZATION.

"YOU DON'T LOOK VERY GOOD, STAN.

"HOBAN, WE'RE ON OUR FINAL APPROACH."

SEE? WHAT DID I TELL YOU, STAN? A WALK IN THE PARK.

GGGGGGGGGGG

CONTACT WITH ATMOSPHERE ...NOW.

THE PROFILE LOOKS NOMINAL, GILL. ESTABLISH BRAKING SEQUENCE.
YOUR SYSTEM SHOWS THE WEATHER IS WORSE THAN WE ANTICIPATED. COMPENSATE BRAKING TO ACCOMMODATE.
YOU'RE ALMOST IN POSITION. DON'T TAKE TOO LONG MAKING US ALL RICH.

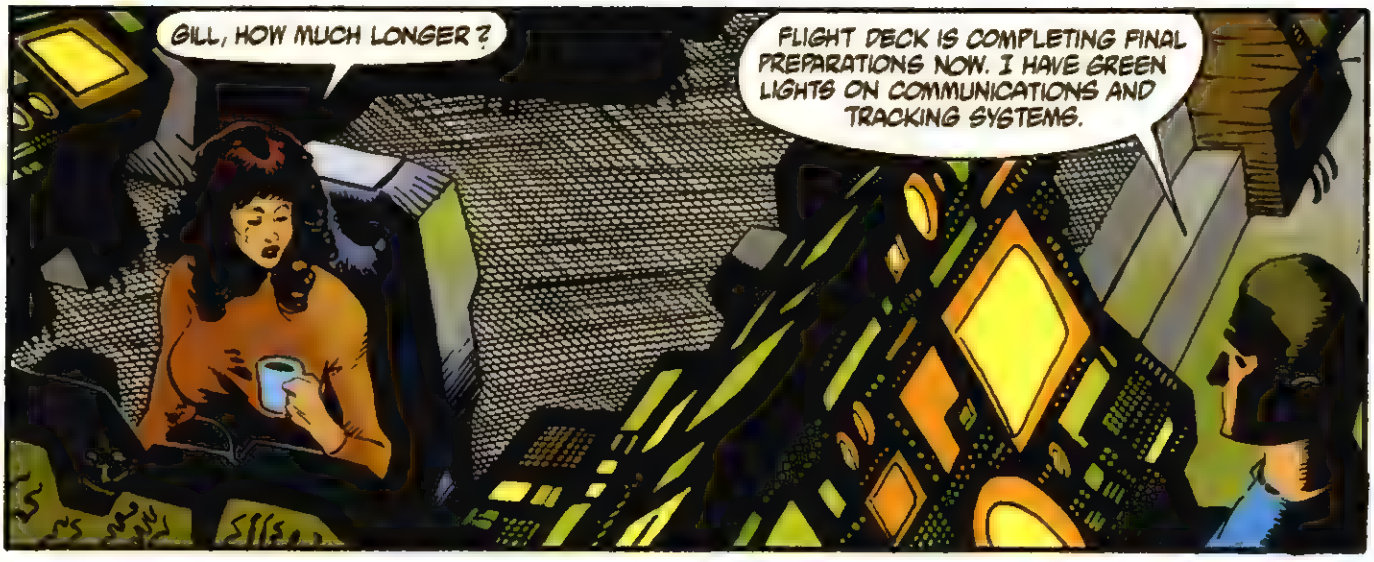
SSSSSSSSS

ANYTHING LEFT?
DOLOMITE'S LOG. CAPTAIN'S ENTRY. FOLLOWING THE LAUNCH OF THE MISSION PLATFORM, I'VE DECIDED TO EXAMINE SOME OF THE DEBRIS WE NOTICED IN ORBIT. UNDER CLOSER SCRUTINY, WE'VE DISCOVERED THE REMAINS OF A SHIP.
TWO MEN HAVE GONE ON BOARD TO LOOK FOR ONE OF THE SHIP'S BLACK BOXES. I HOPE TO FIND OUT WHAT HAPPENED AND IF IT WILL AFFECT OUR MISSION.

WE'RE GETTING CLOSE. I'VE GOT IT ON A LOCATOR. IT'S JUST THAT...WHAT IF ONE OF THOSE THINGS...?
TAKE IT EASY. DON'T GET SPOOKED.

I'VE GOT THE RECORDER.

GET THAT THING BACK HERE ON THE DOUBLE! I WANT TO KNOW WHAT HAPPENED TO THAT SHIP.


GILL, HOW MUCH LONGER?
FLIGHT DECK IS COMPLETING FINAL PREPARATIONS NOW. I HAVE GREEN LIGHTS ON COMMUNICATIONS AND TRACKING SYSTEMS.

STAN'LL WANT TO GO OVER SOME LAST-MINUTE DETAILS, I'M SURE.
WILL YOU LOOK AT THE SIZE OF THIS THING...

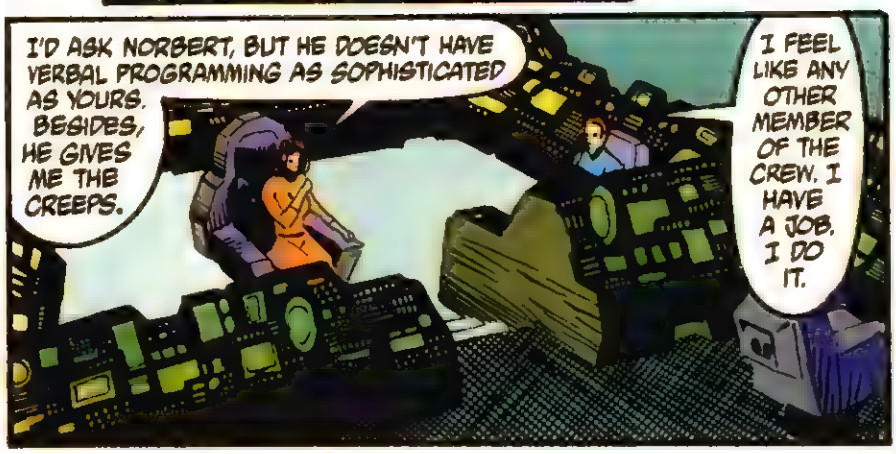
THE HIVE IS ALMOST 1000 METERS HIGH. PRETTY IMPRESSIVE ON A PLANET WHERE THE HIGHEST NATURALLY-OCCURRING "PEAK" IS ONLY 350 METERS.
THE WEATHER IS OBSCURING THE IMAGING SYSTEM. I HOPE NORBERT DOESN'T HAVE ANY TROUBLE.

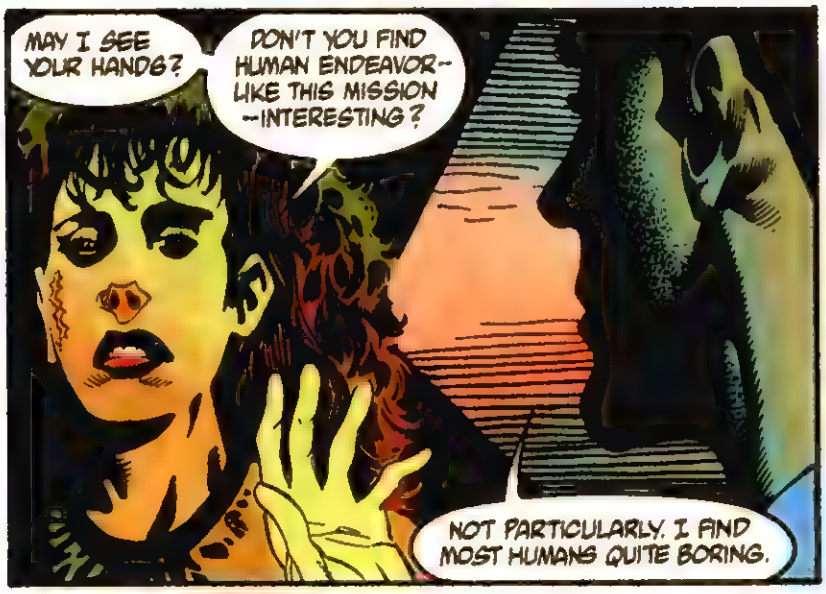
YOU NEVER KNOW WHAT ELSE MIGHT BE DOWN THERE.
WHAT DO YOU WANT?

SORRY, NO TIME. MAYBE YOU CAN GET NORBERT TO PLAY WITH YOU BEFORE YOU LEAVE.

WHAT DO YOU THINK OF ALL THIS?

WHY DO YOU ASK?
WELL...I GUESS YOU HAVE A UNIQUE PERSPECTIVE.

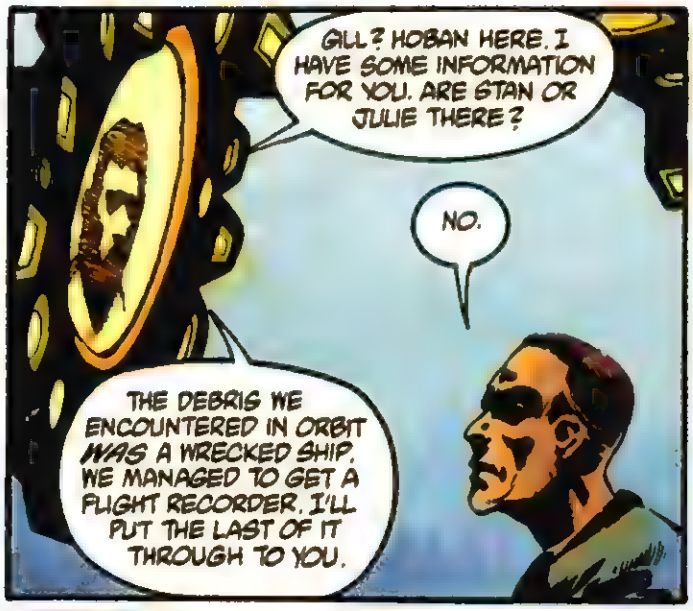

I'D ASK NORBERT, BUT HE DOESN'T HAVE VERBAL PROGRAMMING AS SOPHISTICATED AS YOURS. BESIDES, HE GIVES ME THE CREEPS.
I FEEL LIKE ANY OTHER MEMBER OF THE CREW. I HAVE A JOB, I DO IT.

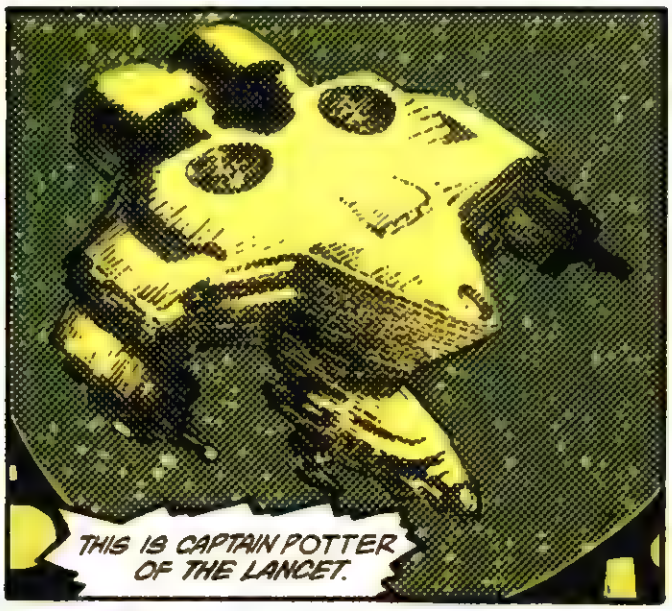

MAY I SEE YOUR HANDS?
DON'T YOU FIND HUMAN ENDEAVOR--LIKE THIS MISSION--INTERESTING?
NOT PARTICULARLY. I FIND MOST HUMANS QUITE BORING.

THEY LOOK SO MUCH LIKE MY FATHER'S HANDS. I'D BETTER GO GET STAN. I HOPE WE GET THE CHANCE TO TALK SOME MORE.

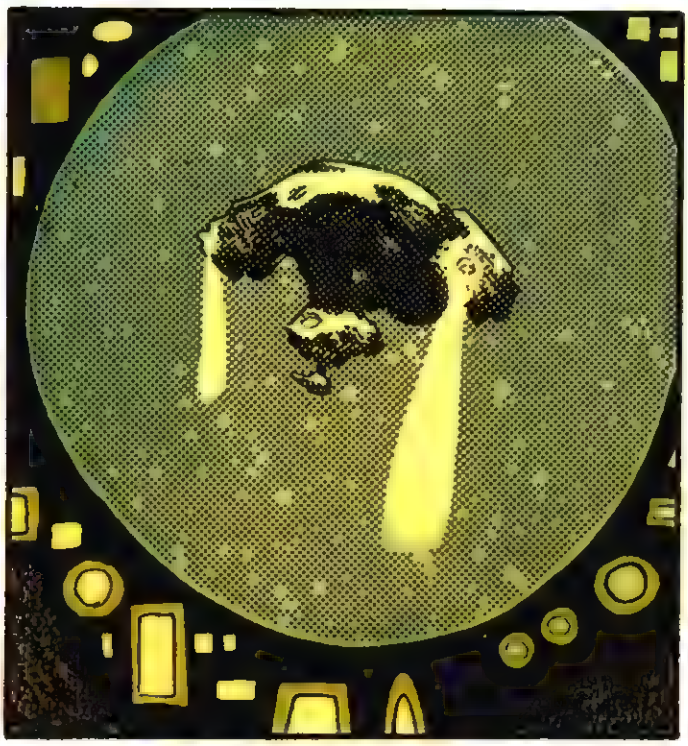
ONE LAST THING...
YES?
SOMETIMES I THINK IT WOULD BE BETTER TO BE A SYNTHETIC, ABLE TO RE-PROGRAM MYSELF WITH A NEW CHIP OR BIO-ELECTRICAL CIRCUIT.
DO YOU EVER THINK YOU'RE MISSING SOMETHING? BY NOT BEING HUMAN, I MEAN?

NOT THAT I'M AWARE OF.
I'M GOING TO GET STAN. SEE YOU SOON.


GILL? HOBAN HERE. I HAVE SOME INFORMATION FOR YOU. ARE STAN OR JULIE THERE?
NO.
THE DEBRIS WE ENCOUNTERED IN ORBIT WAS A WRECKED SHIP. WE MANAGED TO GET A FLIGHT RECORDER. I'LL PUT THE LAST OF IT THROUGH TO YOU.

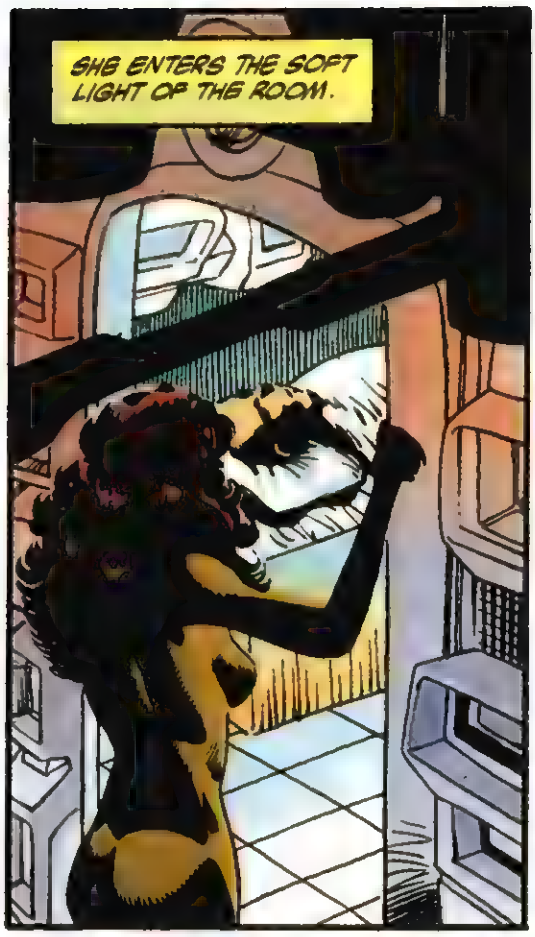

THIS IS CAPTAIN POTTER OF THE LANCET.

YOU ARE GUILTY OF CRIMINAL TRESPASS. YOU WON'T LIVE TO REGRET YOUR DECISION.



COMPUTER OFF LINE AT 15:30:42

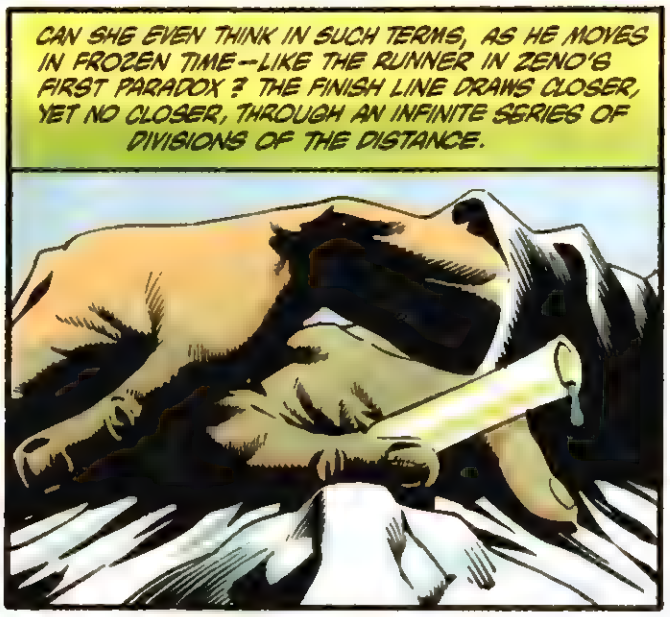
MY GUESS IS THAT THEY'RE STILL SOMEWHERE IN THE SECTOR. SAVE THIS INFORMATION UNDER SECURE FILE HJ 3729. YOU WILL MAKE NO MENTION OF THIS TO ANY OTHER CREWMEMBER.
DO YOU UNDER-STAND?
YES.


SHE ENTERS THE SOFT LIGHT OF THE ROOM.

BY THE LOOK ON HIS FACE, SHE CAN TELL HE IS OUTSIDE OF TIME. A SOLITARY IMMORTAL MADE OF WAX.

SHE MUSES ON THE VALUE OF AN ETERNITY CONSISTING ONLY OF SOLIPSISM AND MEMORY.

HOW MUCH TIME DO THEY HAVE LEFT?


CAN SHE EVEN THINK IN SUCH TERMS, AS HE MOVES IN FROZEN TIME—LIKE THE RUNNER IN ZENO'S FIRST PARADOX? THE FINISH LINE DRAWS CLOSER, YET NO CLOSER, THROUGH AN INFINITE SERIES OF DIVISIONS OF THE DISTANCE.

HOW CAN THE RACE END WHEN IT'S IMPOSSIBLE TO BEGIN?

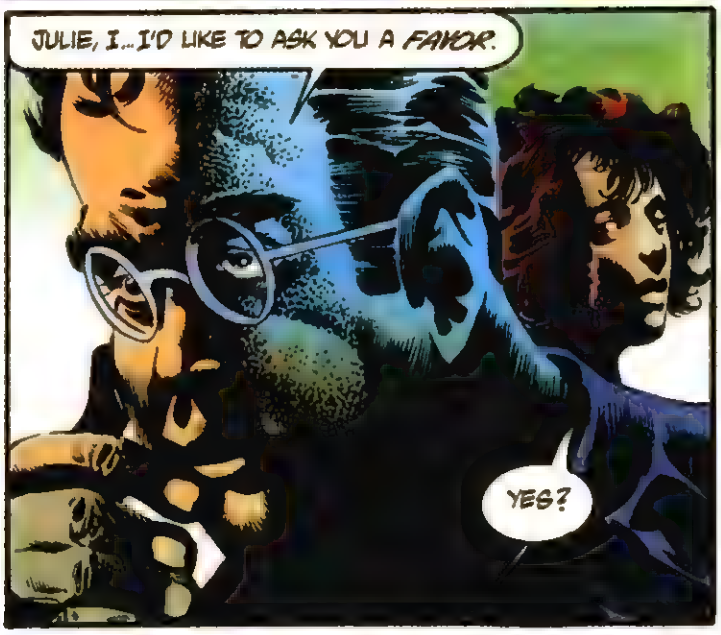
STAN? WHAT ARE YOU DREAMING ABOUT? AM I WITH YOU?
WHAT...

...OUR WALKS THROUGH CENTRAL PARK?
READING TO CHILDREN IN THE LIBRARY?
MAKING LOVE?
NORBERT'S FIRST STEPS?
JULIE?
IS IT TIME?

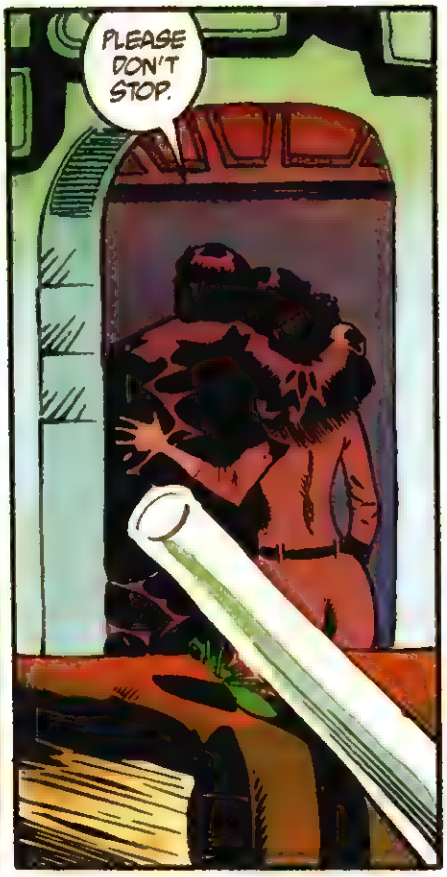
HOW LONG HAVE I BEEN OUT?
NOT LONG. WE'RE JUST NOW GETTING READY.

I WAS DREAMING OF YOU. WE WERE...
SSHHH. I'D RATHER HAVE YOUR TRAVELS BE SECRETS. THAT WAY YOU'RE SO MUCH MORE MYSTERIOUS.

THE ONLY MYSTERY ABOUT ME IS HOW LONG IT WILL BE UNTIL I START BELIEVING THAT KIND OF TALK FROM YOU.


JULIE, I... I'D LIKE TO ASK YOU A FAVOR.
YES?

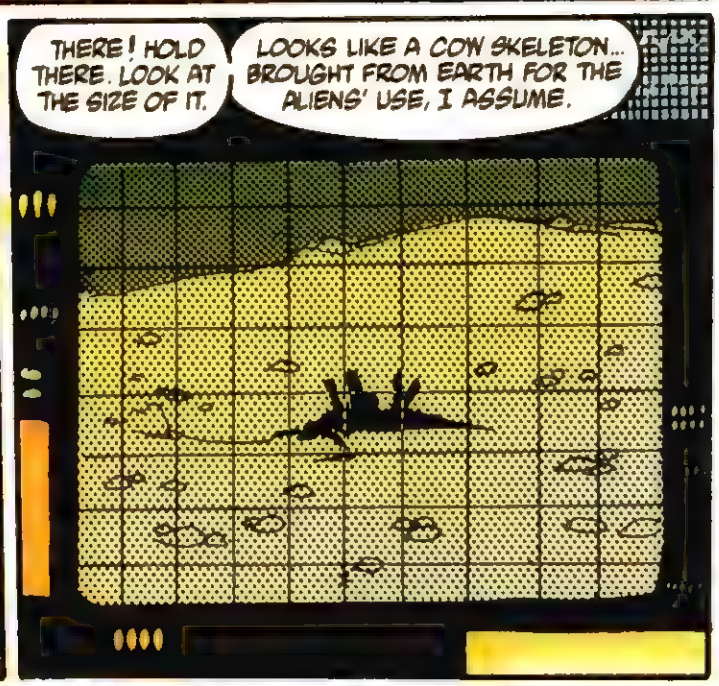
IF YOU'RE MAKING ANY OF THIS UP FOR MY BENEFIT...


PLEASE DON'T STOP.

XL1! WAIT. LET ME PUT THIS ON HIM BEFORE YOU GET INSIDE.
GOOD BOY! A BRAND NEW COLLAR!
BYE, MAC. THANKS FOR YOUR HELP. MAYBE I'LL SEE YOU AGAIN...
YOU'LL ALWAYS BE A GOOD MEMORY.
STATUS REPORT.
ALL FUNCTIONS AND SYSTEMS NOMINAL.
BON VOYAGE. I'LL SPEAK WITH YOU IN A FEW MINUTES.
GOODBYE, DR. MAYAKOVSKY.

STAY, MAC. LET ME ACTIVATE YOUR COLLAR.
FFFSSSSSSK

I'VE GOT A PRETTY GOOD PICTURE. GIVE ME A SLOW PAN OF THE SURROUNDING AREA.

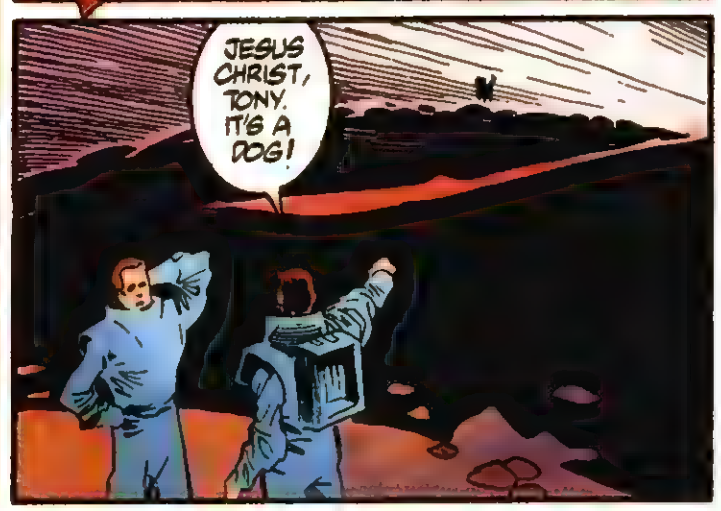

THERE! HOLD THERE. LOOK AT THE SIZE OF IT.
LOOKS LIKE A COW SKELETON... BROUGHT FROM EARTH FOR THE ALIENS' USE, I ASSUME.

WHAT'S THAT IN QUADRANT 8? MAGNIFY.

INVESTIGATE.

NOTHING ON INFRARED. SWITCHING TO ULTRASONICS.
INTERNAL ORGANS ARE FUNCTIONING, BUT AT A VERY SLOW RATE. IT SEEMS INTACT AND WITHOUT INJURY.
IT APPEARS TO BE SLEEPING OR UNCONSCIOUS.

WOOF
WOOF


JESUS CHRIST, TONY. IT'S A DOG!

C'MERE, POOCH. WHAT'RE YOU DOING HERE? WHERE'S YOUR--
ARF
WOOF

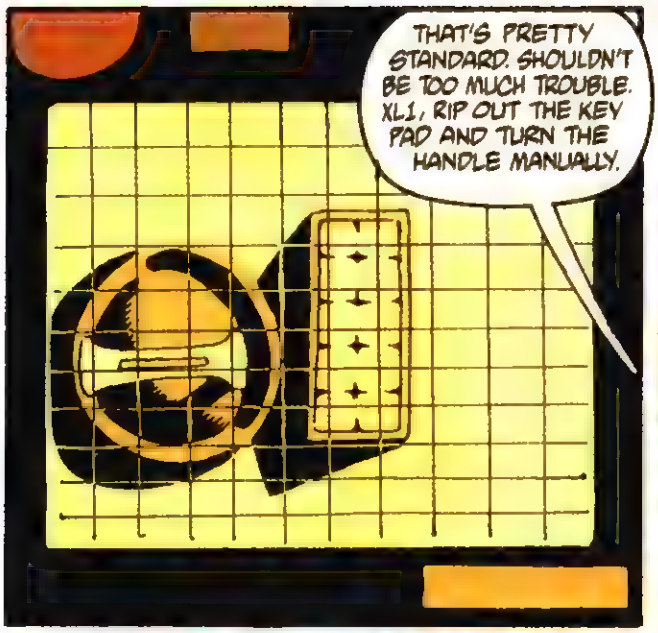
--MASTER?

TONY! ONE OF THEM'S AWAKE!

POK POK POK POK POK

KKKHHHHHH
YAAAAA
WHAT THE HELL?
SSSSSS
OH, NO..

JULIE, PLEASE TAKE GILL OUT OF THE ROOM. HIS BEHAVIORAL PROGRAMMING MAY GIVE HIM AN EMBOLISM IF HE OBSERVES ANY MORE.
HE MAY BE COMPELLED TO ACT. I WOULDN'T WANT HIM TO DO ANYTHING FOOLISH.
GILL, SOMEDAY YOU AND I MUST HAVE A LITTLE TALK ABOUT YOUR PROGRAMMING. IT SHOULD MAKE YOU A LITTLE LESS PREDICTABLE.
XL1, GIVE ME A GOOD PICTURE OF THE LOCKING MECHANISM ON THE DOOR.

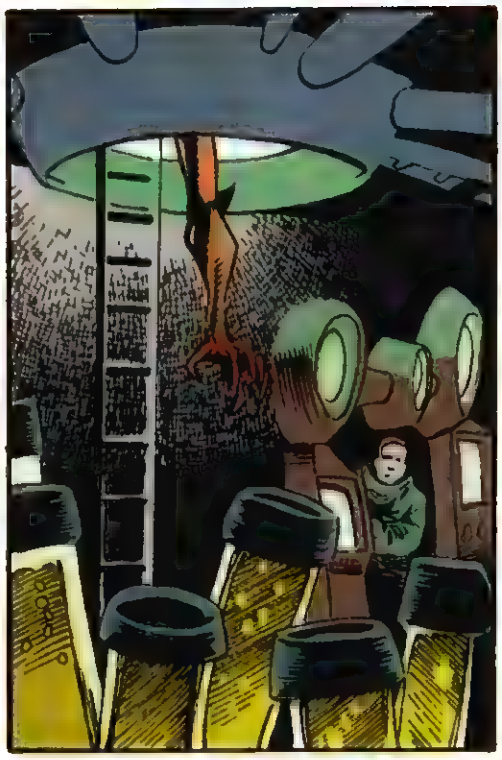

THAT'S PRETTY STANDARD. SHOULDN'T BE TOO MUCH TROUBLE. XL1, RIP OUT THE KEY PAD AND TURN THE HANDLE MANUALLY.

WHAT IS HE DOING AWAKE?
HOW THE HELL SHOULD I KNOW?
HOW SOON TO THE RENDEZVOUS WITH LANCET?

NOT SOON ENOUGH.

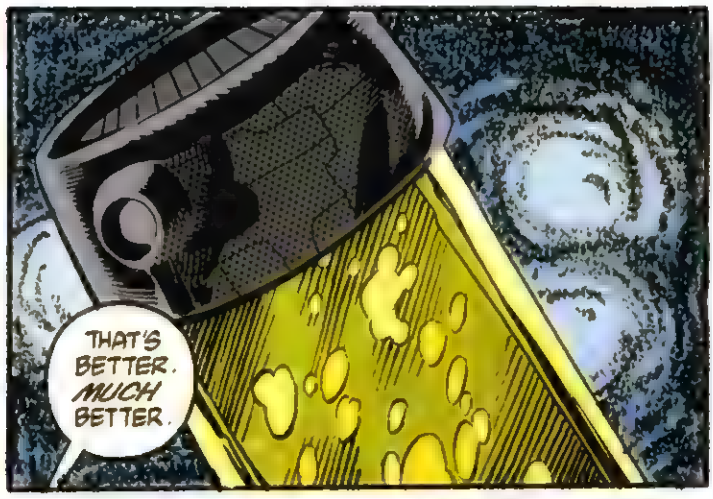
FIRE!

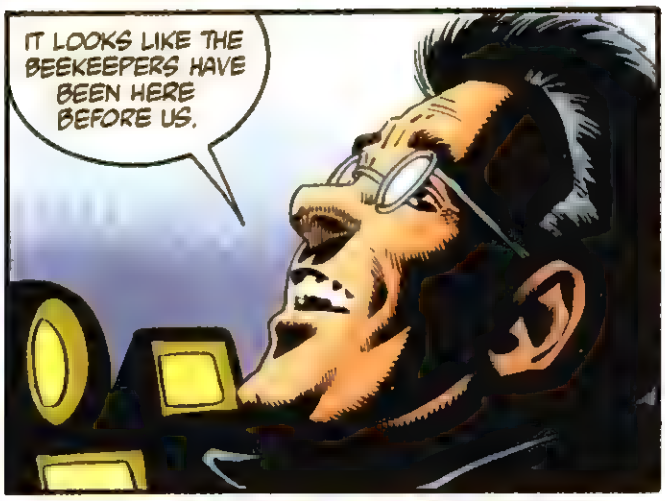
AAAAAIEEEE



KRAAAK

PLEASE CLEAR YOUR VISUAL RECEPTORS AND TAKE A SLOW SCAN OF THE AREA.


THAT'S BETTER. MUCH BETTER.

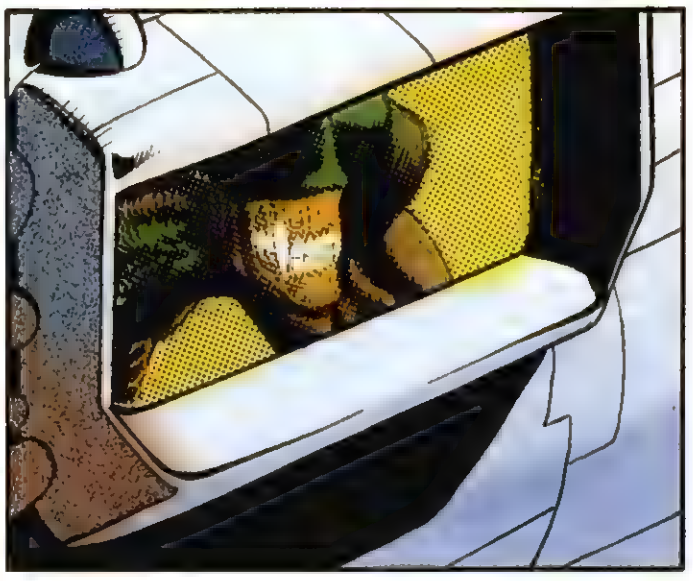

IT LOOKS LIKE THE BEEKEEPERS HAVE BEEN HERE BEFORE US.

LET'S JUST GET SOMEBODY DOWN THERE TO PILOT THE THING --WE'LL BOTH GO BACK TO THE DOLOMITE.

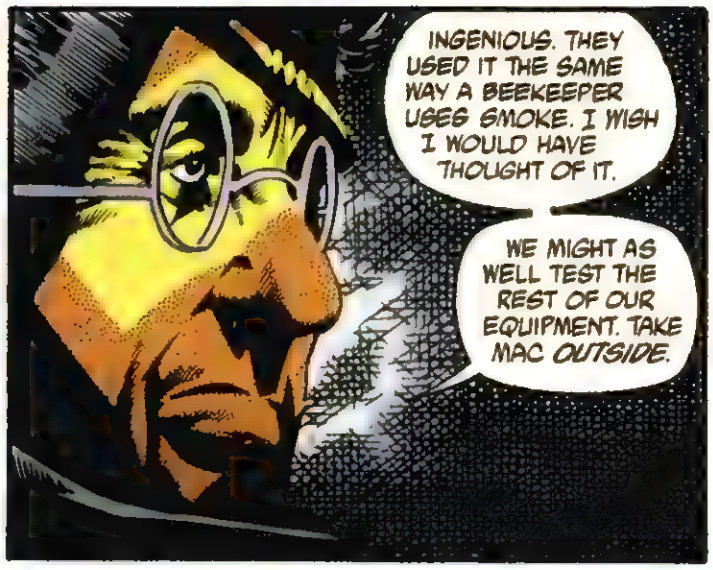
XL1, CHECK THE SHIP FOR DAMAGE AND FLIGHT READINESS. USE ULTRASONIC HOLOGRAPHY TO CHECK FOR BOOBY TRAPS OR ACTIVE SELF-DESTRUCT SYSTEMS.

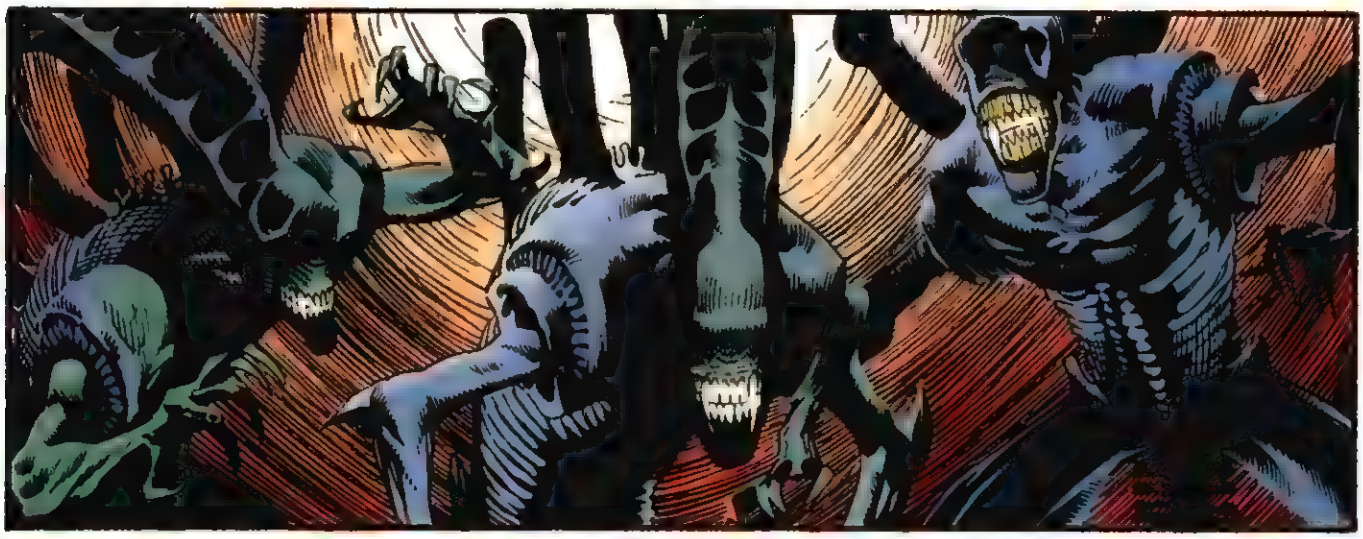
THIS SYSTEM APPEARS TO BE SERIOUSLY DAMAGED. I CANNOT DETERMINE ITS FUNCTION.

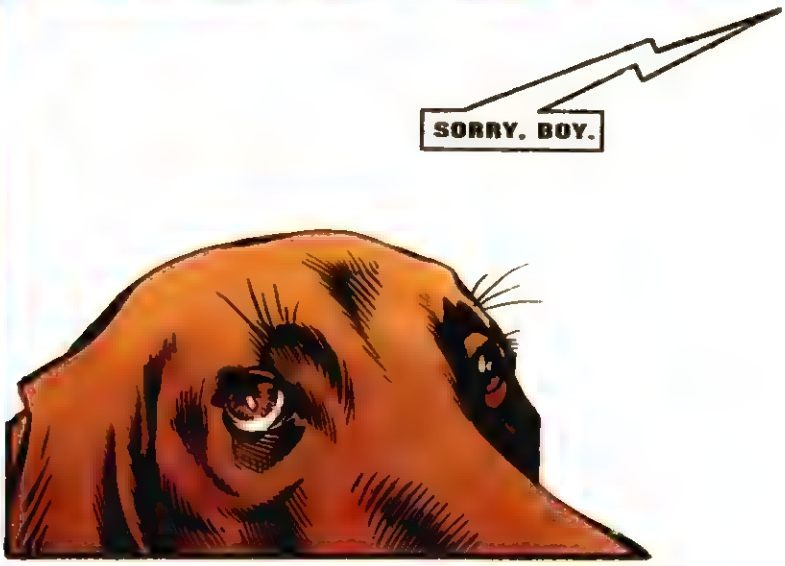
GIVE ME A VISUAL OF CONDITIONS OUTSIDE.

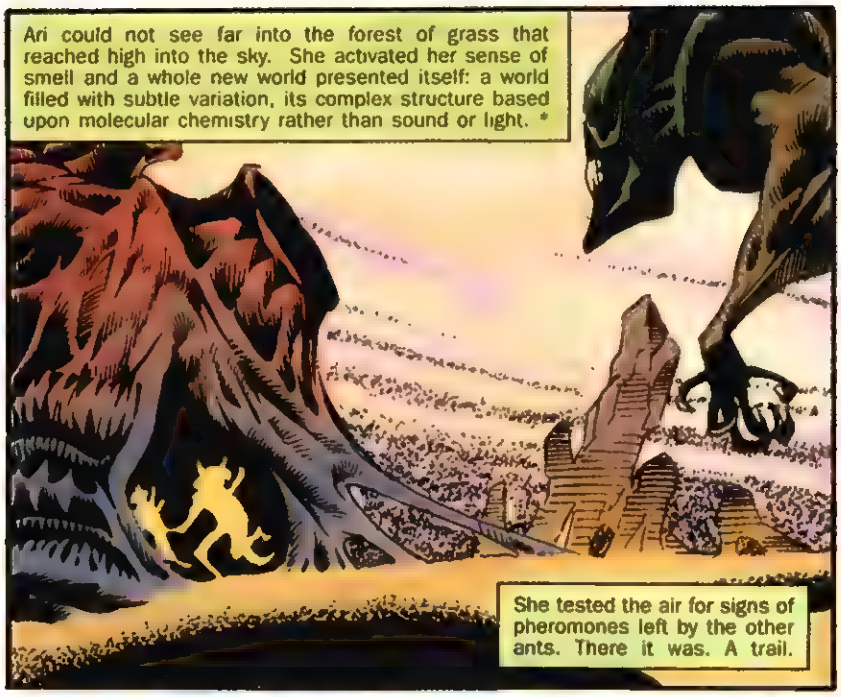


WELL, NOW WE KNOW WHAT IT DID. IT LOOKS LIKE THE CREW WAS USING SOME SORT OF INFRASONIC SUPPRESSION SYSTEM...


INGENIOUS. THEY USED IT THE SAME WAY A BEEKEEPER USES SMOKE. I WISH I WOULD HAVE THOUGHT OF IT.
WE MIGHT AS WELL TEST THE REST OF OUR EQUIPMENT. TAKE MAC *OUTSIDE*.



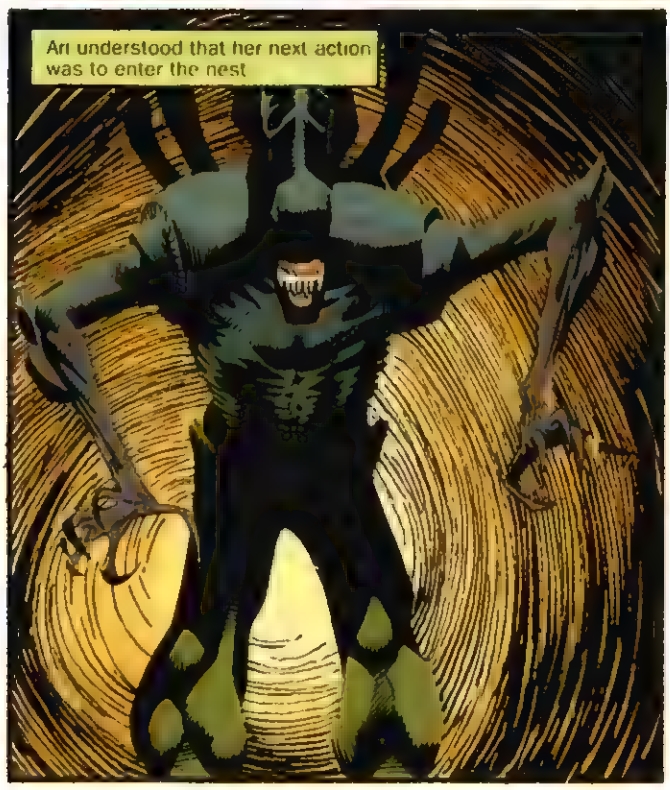

SORRY, BOY.



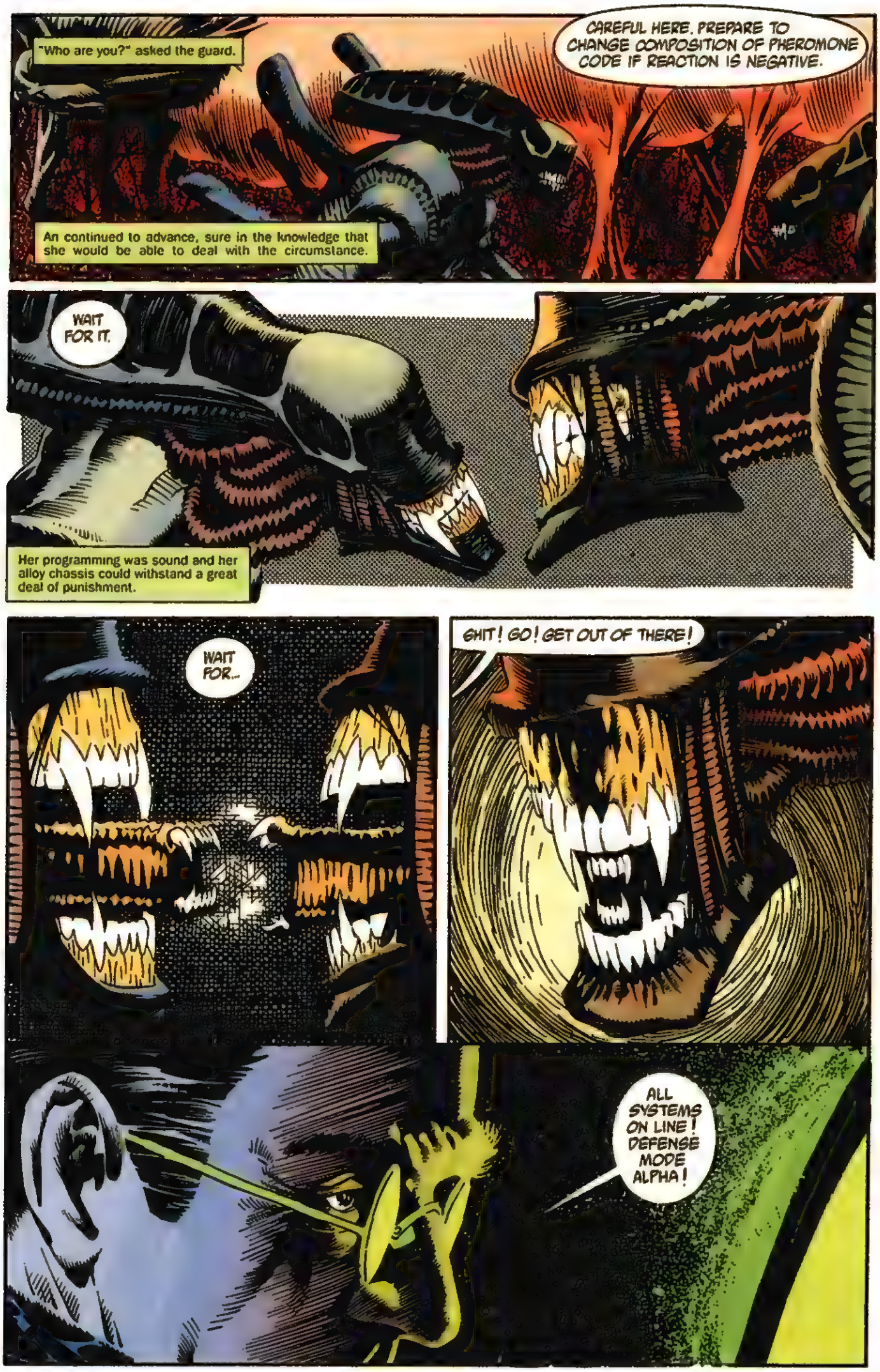
*From CYBERANTICS by Stanislaw Mayakovsky.

The hive was filled with activity
Ari could hear all the ants moving around her. Some were carrying food to storage areas.
Others were attending to the eggs and larvae.
Ari could hear the incessant clickings of the young ants. "Food. Food. Food..."
She followed the sound to proceed with the next phase of her program
The center of life in the hive

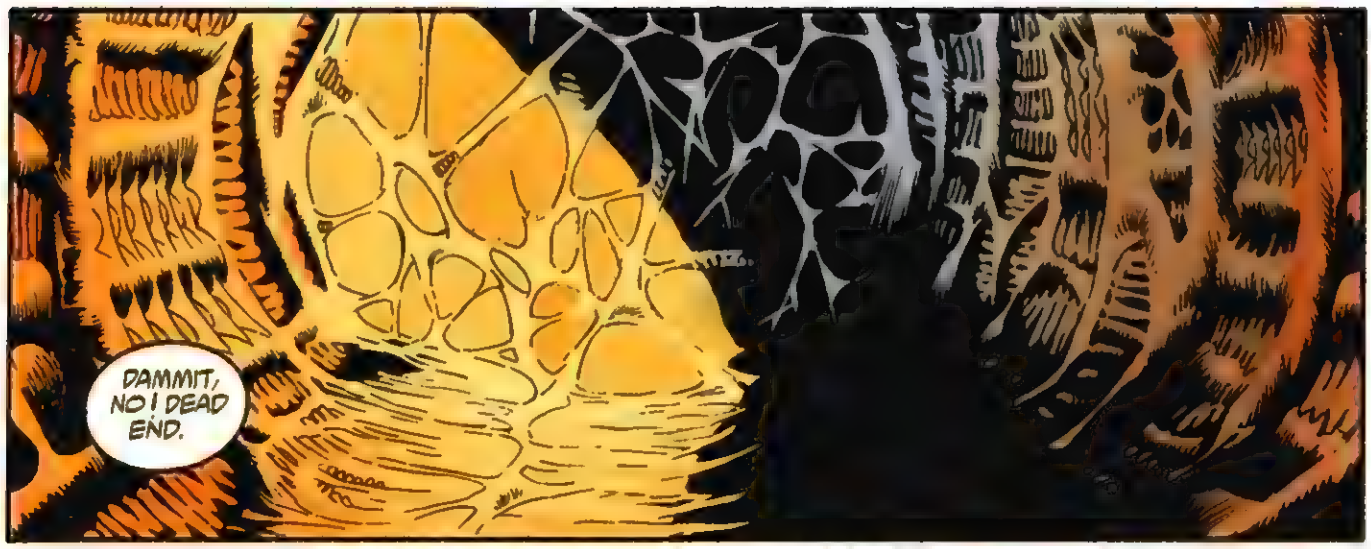
. . . the Queen
THERE'S THE GRAND OLD LADY HERSELF.
XL1, ADVANCE AND ACTIVATE RECOGNITION PROGRAMMING.

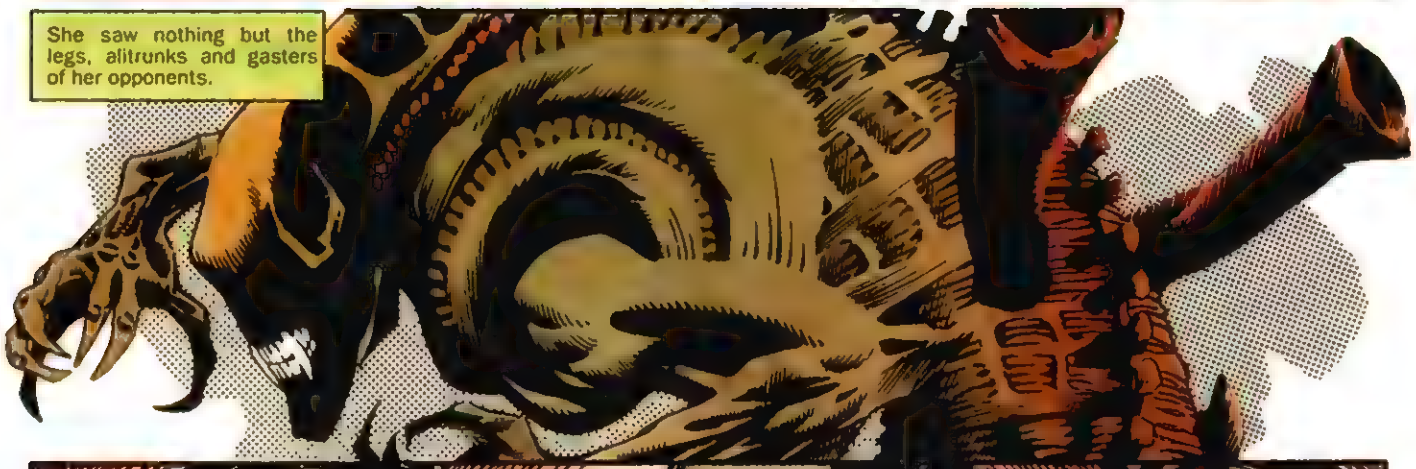

Ari understood that her next action was to enter the nest

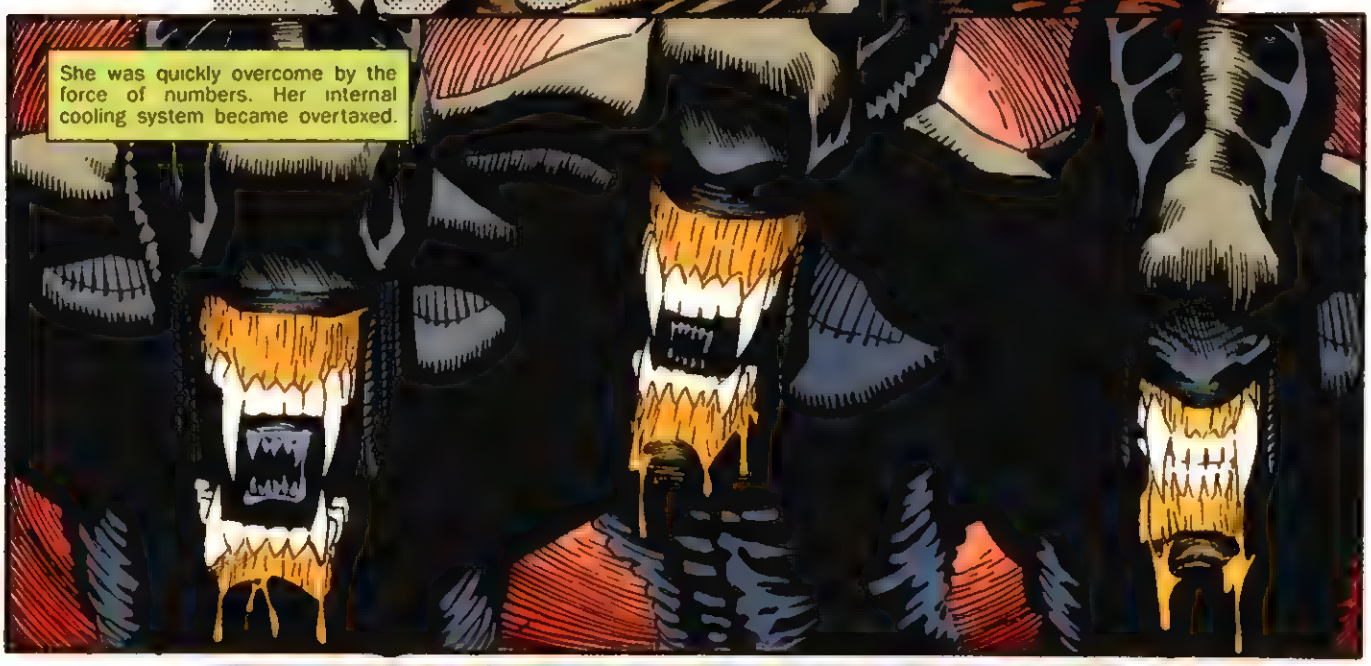
As she moved closer, a guard approached her. It did not recognize her scent and took a defensive posture

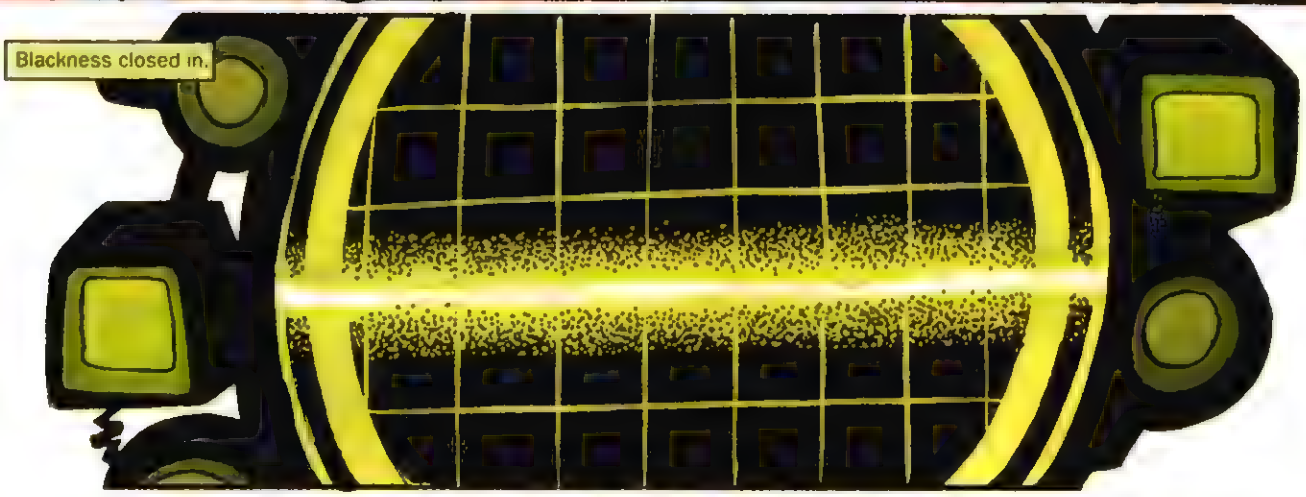

"Who are you?" asked the guard.
CAREFUL HERE. PREPARE TO CHANGE COMPOSITION OF PHEROMONE CODE IF REACTION IS NEGATIVE.
An continued to advance, sure in the knowledge that she would be able to deal with the circumstance.
WAIT FOR IT.
Her programming was sound and her alloy chassis could withstand a great deal of punishment.
WAIT FOR...
SHIT! GO! GET OUT OF THERE!
ALL SYSTEMS ON LINE! DEFENSE MODE ALPHA!

Ari ran through the nest as fast as her six legs could carry her.
The wave of the glistening black bodies moved ahead with the precision of a military regime on the parade grounds. A million-legged phalanx.
The desire to reach their destination coursed through black, chitinous bodies.
Mandibles snapped and ground in anticipation.


DAMMIT, NO! DEAD END.


She saw nothing but the legs, alitrunks and gasters of her opponents.


She was quickly overcome by the force of numbers. Her internal cooling system became overtaxed.

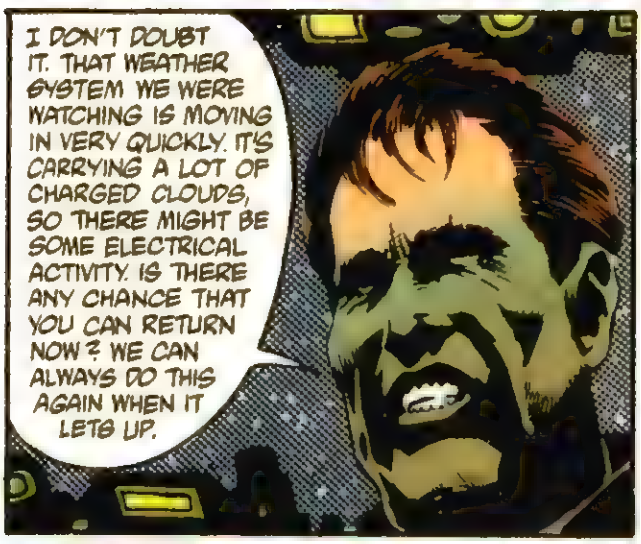

Blackness closed in.

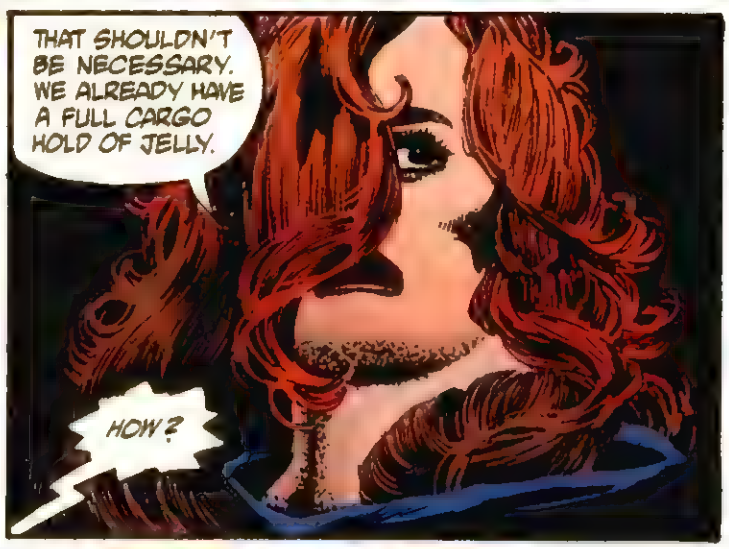
NO.

NO!

DAMN! WHY THE HELL DID I SEND HIM INSIDE? WE HAD EVERYTHING WE CAME FOR.
GILL, DO YOU COPY? THIS IS HOBAN.

I'M RECEIVING YOU, SIR, BUT THE SIGNAL IS WEAK.

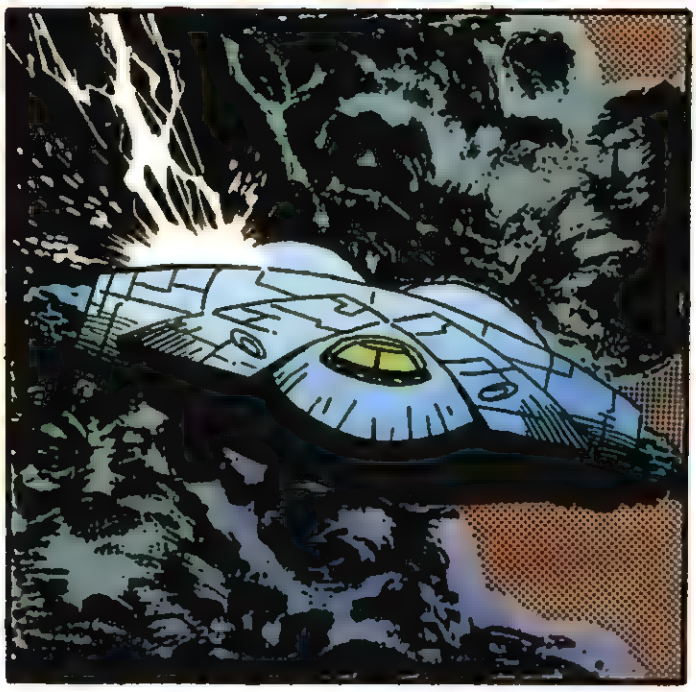

I DON'T DOUBT IT. THAT WEATHER SYSTEM WE WERE WATCHING IS MOVING IN VERY QUICKLY. IT'S CARRYING A LOT OF CHARGED CLOUDS, SO THERE MIGHT BE SOME ELECTRICAL ACTIVITY. IS THERE ANY CHANCE THAT YOU CAN RETURN NOW? WE CAN ALWAYS DO THIS AGAIN WHEN IT LETS UP.


THAT SHOULDN'T BE NECESSARY. WE ALREADY HAVE A FULL CARGO HOLD OF JELLY.
HOW?

WE WERE LUCKY ENOUGH TO HAVE RUN INTO SOME BEEKEEPERS, BUT THE CYBERNETIC ALIEN WAS DESTROYED.

I CAN'T SAY I'M SORRY TO HEAR ABOUT THAT, BUT I'M GLAD YOU CAN GET OUT OF THERE.
IT SHOULDN'T TAKE US LONG TO GET A MAN DOWN THERE. THEN WE CAN JUST LIFT OFF AND BOTH HEAD INTO ORBIT TOGETHER FOR A PICKUP.
HOBAN THINKS WE SHOULD GO.
I HEARD.
I'M SORRY ABOUT NORBERT... I MEAN, XL 1.
I SHOULDN'T FEEL BAD--HE WAS DOING WHAT HE WAS DESIGNED TO DO. WE SHOULD ALL BE SO LUCKY.

ARI, I'VE GOT SOME BAD NEWS FOR YOU.



THINGS HAVE GONE FROM BAD TO WORSE, STAN.

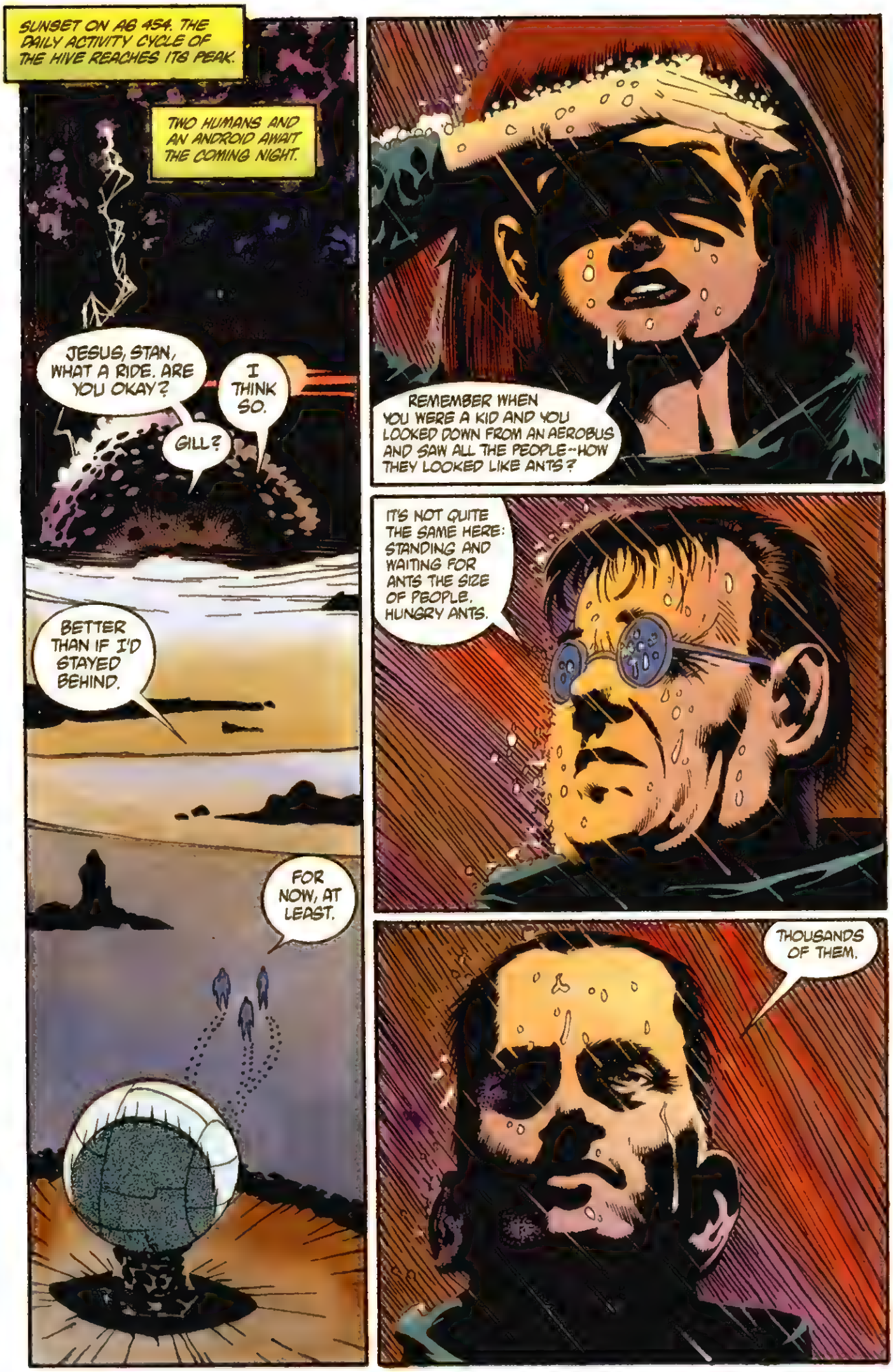
GILL, THE STABILIZERS ARE GONE!
WE'VE GOT TO GET TO ONE OF THE PODS.

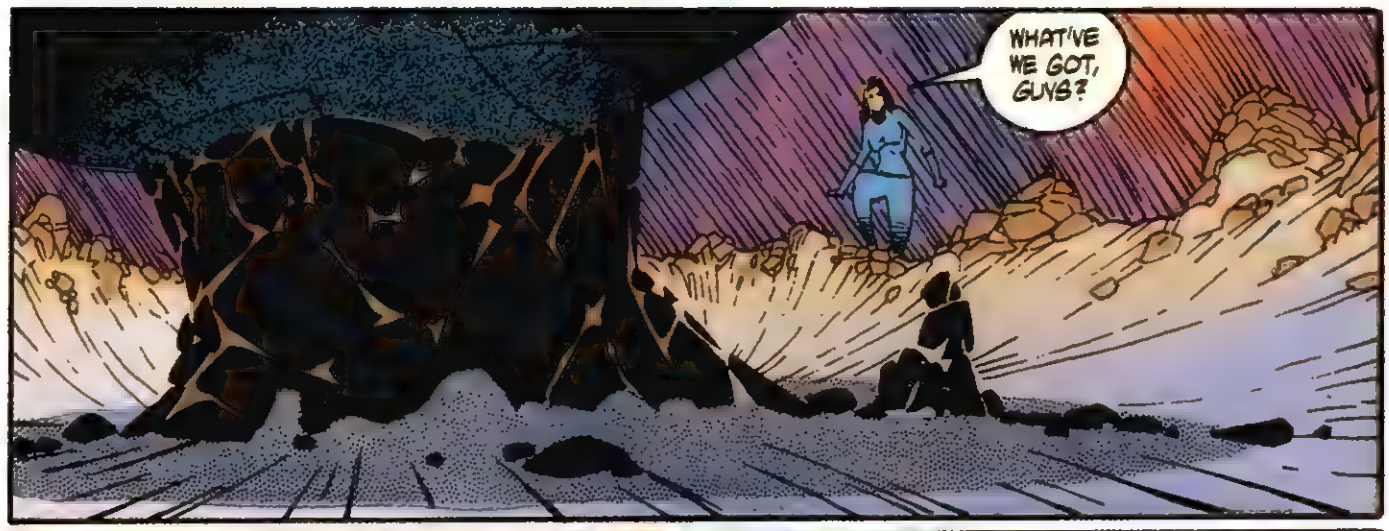
ALL HANDS... ABANDON SHIP!

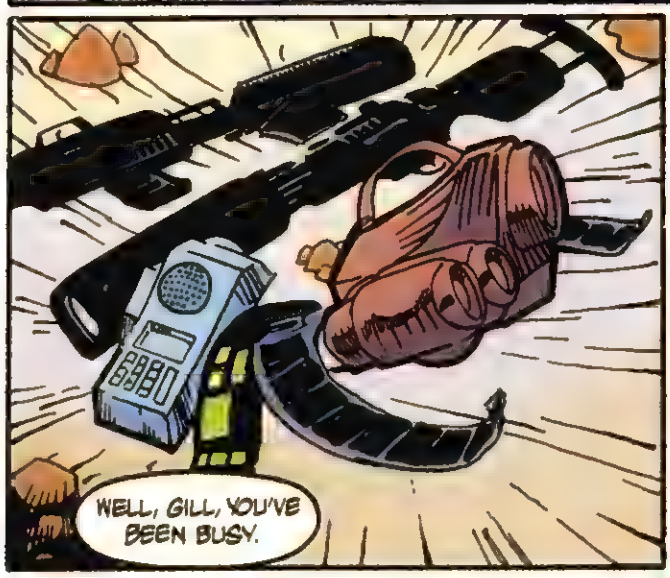
IS ANYONE ELSE GOING TO MAKE IT? I SHOULD GO BACK INSIDE TO LOOK.

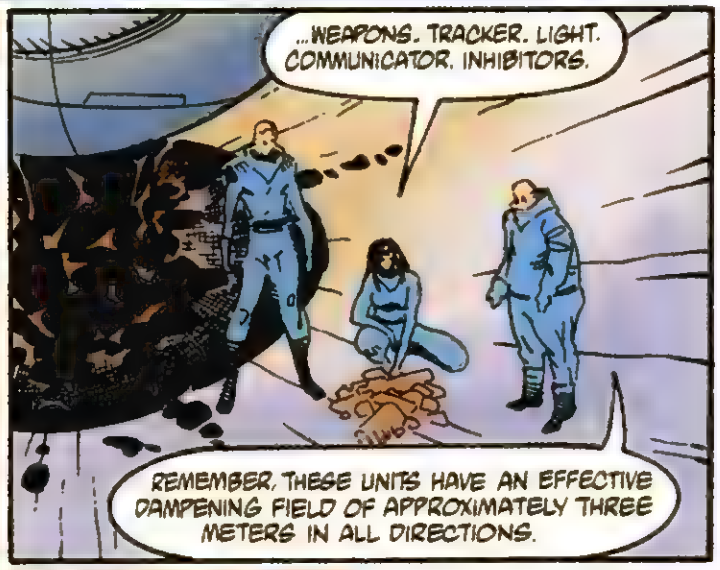
GET INSIDE! REMEMBER, YOU'RE PROGRAMMED TO KEEP ALL HUMANS ALIVE. WE NEED YOU.

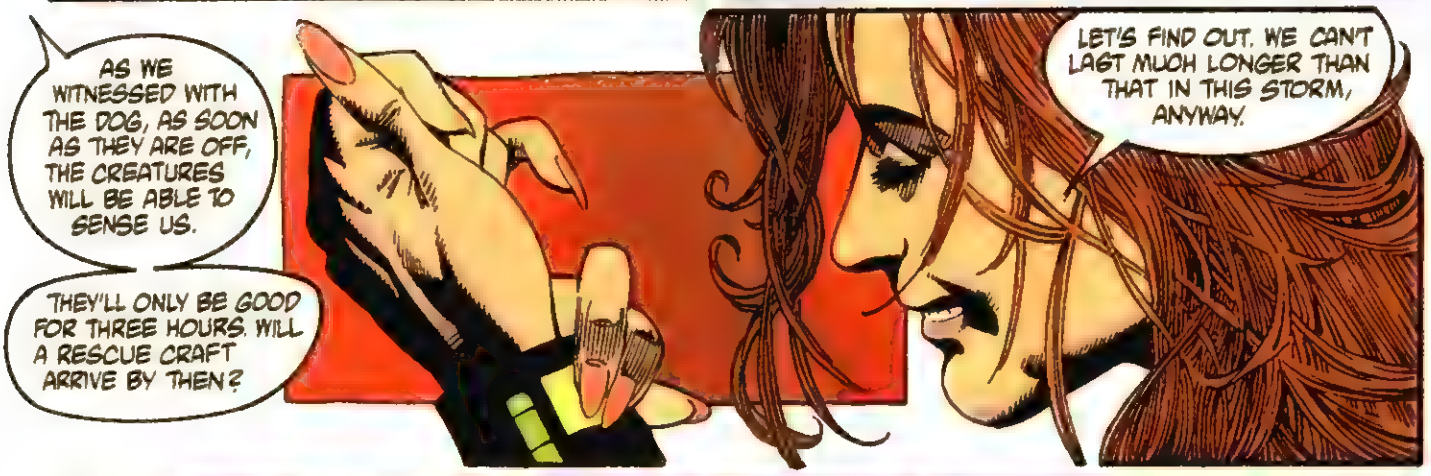
WE'RE COMING IN VERY FAST. BRACE YOUR-SELVES.
I REALLY HATE THIS PART.
DAAAAAAAAAAMN IT!
CHAAAAAAAST


SUNSET ON AB 454. THE DAILY ACTIVITY CYCLE OF THE HIVE REACHES ITS PEAK.
TWO HUMANS AND AN ANDROID AWAIT THE COMING NIGHT.
JESUS, STAN, WHAT A RIDE. ARE YOU OKAY?
I THINK SO.
GILL?
BETTER THAN IF I'D STAYED BEHIND.
FOR NOW, AT LEAST.
REMEMBER WHEN YOU WERE A KID AND YOU LOOKED DOWN FROM AN AEROBUS AND SAW ALL THE PEOPLE--HOW THEY LOOKED LIKE ANTS?
IT'S NOT QUITE THE SAME HERE: STANDING AND WAITING FOR ANTS THE SIZE OF PEOPLE. HUNGRY ANTS.
THOUSANDS OF THEM.


WHAT'VE WE GOT, GUYS?


WELL, GILL, YOU'VE BEEN BUSY.

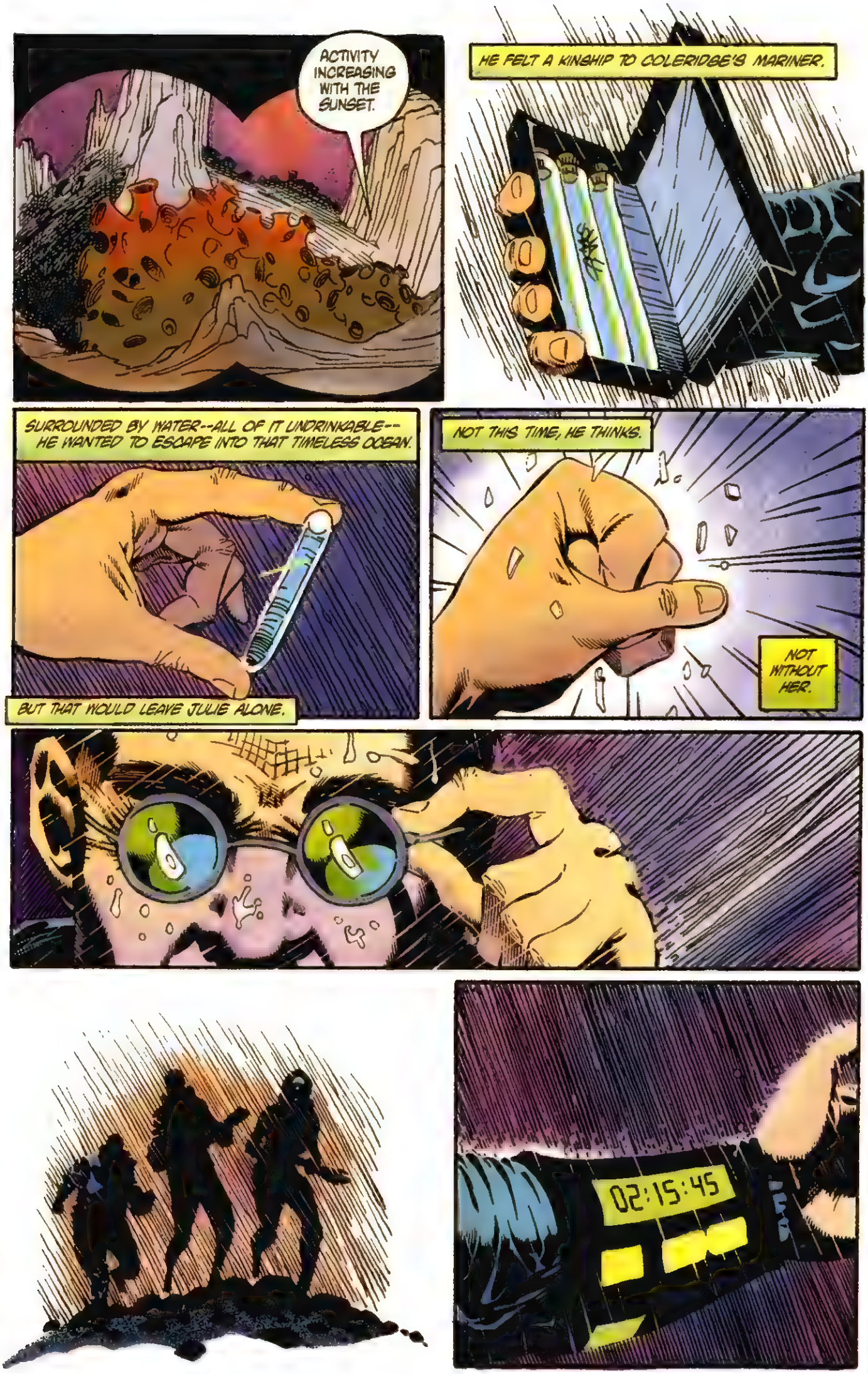

...WEAPONS. TRACKER. LIGHT. COMMUNICATOR. INHIBITORS.
REMEMBER, THESE UNITS HAVE AN EFFECTIVE DAMPENING FIELD OF APPROXIMATELY THREE METERS IN ALL DIRECTIONS.


AS WE WITNESSED WITH THE DOG, AS SOON AS THEY ARE OFF, THE CREATURES WILL BE ABLE TO SENSE US.
THEY'LL ONLY BE GOOD FOR THREE HOURS. WILL A RESCUE CRAFT ARRIVE BY THEN?
LET'S FIND OUT. WE CAN'T LAST MUCH LONGER THAN THAT IN THIS STORM, ANYWAY.

HOBAN, COME IN. THIS IS JULIAN.
JESUS, JULIE! WHAT THE HELL HAPPENED DOWN THERE?
NO TIME FOR EXPLANATIONS. WE NEED A PICKUP AT THIS LOCATION IMMEDIATELY!

IT'LL TAKE A COUPLE OF HOURS. WHAT'S YOUR SITUATION?
WE'LL GET A LANDER PREPPED AND DOWN TO YOU.
WE CAN'T MAKE IT THAT LONG. I DON'T THINK ANYONE ELSE MADE IT OFF THE PLATFORM.
WHAT WAS THAT, JULIAN? I DIDN'T COPY.
I'LL GET BACK TO YOU WITH OUR PLANS, HOBAN. WE DON'T HAVE MANY CHOICES.
02:58:20
WE GO INSIDE.
THEY CAN'T SEE US. WE CAN GET OUT OF THE STORM AND TRAVEL THROUGH THE HIVE. WE HAVE THE LOCATOR AND WILL BE ABLE TO PICK UP XL1'S PATH OUT OF THE HIVE. THAT WILL LEAD US BACK TO THE LANDER XL1 FOUND. THEN, WE'LL FLY THE LANDER BACK TO THE DOLOMITE. WHAT DO YOU THINK?

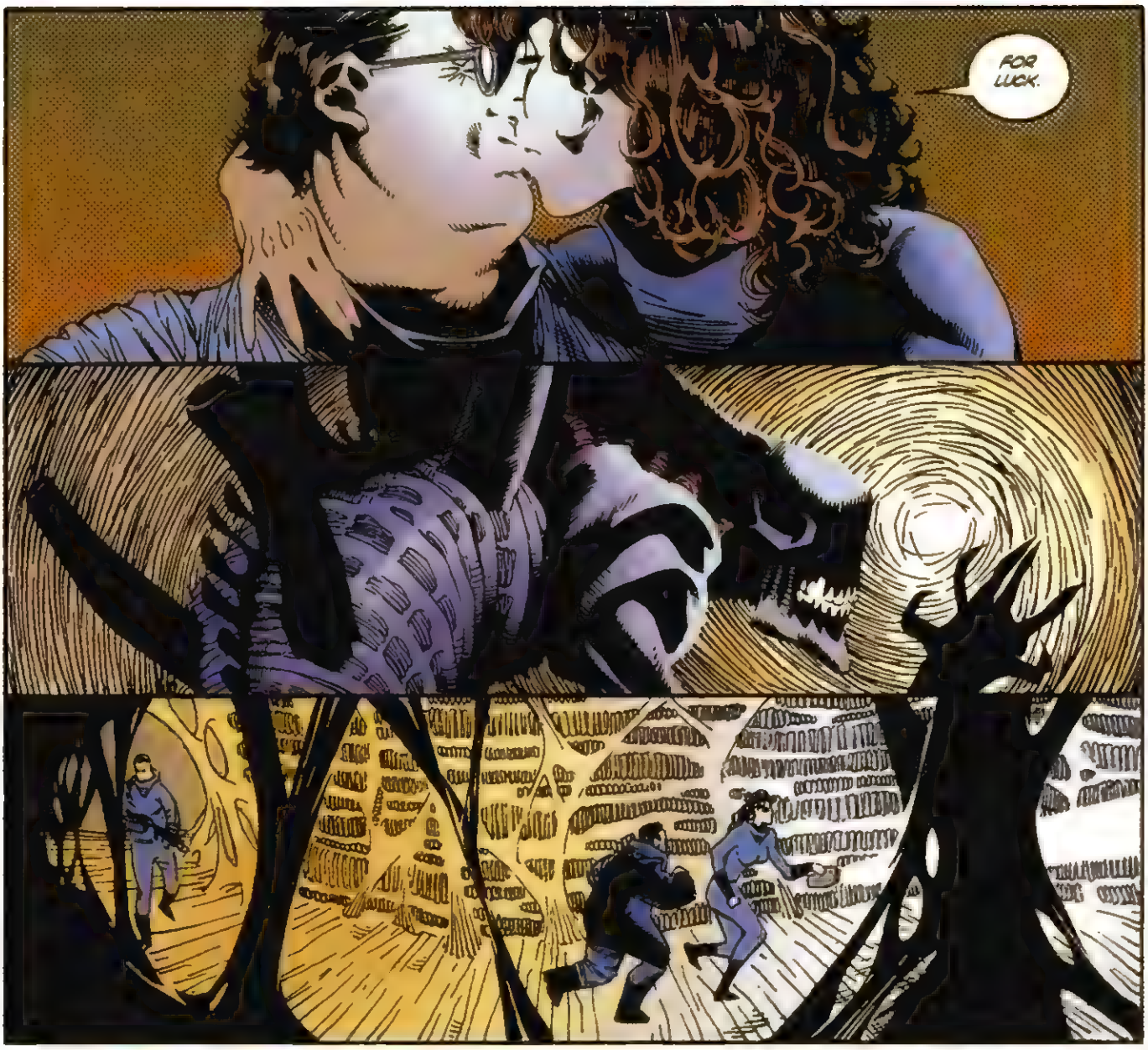
INTO THE HIVE? WE WOULD BE TAKING AN INADVISABLE RISK.
WE'LL DIE OUT HERE, EITHER FROM THE STORM OR WHEN OUR TIME RUNS OUT...
YOU'RE RIGHT, STAN-- WHAT DO WE HAVE TO LOSE?
OUR LIVES?
READY?
YES.
I STILL BELIEVE THIS IS EXTREMELY INADVISABLE.
WELL, GILL, YOU AREN'T IN MUCH OF A POSITION TO JUDGE. YOU CAN STAY HERE IF YOU LIKE. WE'LL RETURN AND PICK YOU UP IN THE LANDER. OR...
I'LL ACCOMPANY YOU. I CANNOT PERMIT YOU TO GO INTO A DANGEROUS SITUATION AND NOT ATTEMPT TO PROVIDE HELP.
GOOD. LET'S GO. EVERY SECOND WE WAIT IS ONE MORE THEY'LL BE ABLE TO SENSE US.


ACTIVITY INCREASING WITH THE SUNSET.
HE FELT A KINSHIP TO COLERIDGE'S MARINER.
SURROUNDED BY WATER--ALL OF IT UNDRINKABLE--HE WANTED TO ESCAPE INTO THAT TIMELESS OCEAN.
BUT THAT WOULD LEAVE JULIE ALONE.
NOT THIS TIME, HE THINKS.
NOT WITHOUT HER.
02:15:45

SHE STOPS BREATHING, SLIPPING INTO PRACTICED SILENCE.
IT'S NO WORSE THAN ANY OTHER JOB, SHE THINKS TO HERSELF.

BREATHE.
SHIT!
01:45:16

SHE WELCOMES HER FRIEND, THE DARKNESS, BUT THE SILENCE HERE UNNERVES HER.
SHE TAKES SOME COMFORT IN HEARING STAN'S LABORED BREATHING, BUT PRAYS IT IS NOT TOO CONSPICUOUS.
SHE HAS NO DOUBTS ABOUT GILL'S FUNCTIONING, BUT STAN IS ANOTHER MATTER.
A SCHOLARLY LIFESTYLE DIDN'T GIVE HIM MUCH PREPARATION FOR THIS.
SHE WONDERS WHY SHE IS DRAWN TO HIM. HIS QUEST FOR A SOLITARY IMMORTALITY PUZZLES HER.
HIS SOJOURNS AWAY FROM HER, AWAY FROM TIME, LEAVE HER UPSET AND LONELY. HIS DEPARTURE LEAVES A VACUUM THAT TOO SUDDENLY SNAPS CLOSED.
WHAT IS LEFT FOR HER BESIDES THE MEMORY OF HIS PASSING...
...AND EMPTINESS?


FOR LUCK.

THIS IS IT. EVERYBODY, BE VERY...
...QUIET.
01:36:16

IT FLOWS OUT OF THE DARKNESS.
SHE CURSES ITS DEADLY SILENCE.
THE CREATURE SENSES SOMETHING NOT USUALLY FOUND IN THIS LEVEL OF THE NEST, BUT CANNOT DETERMINE THE SOURCE.
IT MOVES ON.
AS DO THEY.
THE LOCATOR SHOWS NO SIGNS OF THE TRAIL OF RADIOACTIVE "BREAD CRUMBS" DEPOSITED BY THE SPUR ON XL1'S FOOT. THEY MUST GO DEEPER TO FIND THE WAY OUT.

WHAT'S THIS?
IT APPEARS TO BE A MIDDEN— A GARBAGE DUMP.

I WANT TO GET A LOOK. I'VE FOUND INTERESTING THINGS IN EXAMINING ANT MIDDENS.

ONE CAN GET A GOOD SENSE ABOUT THE LIFE OF THE HIVE AND WHAT THEY EAT.

WHA--?

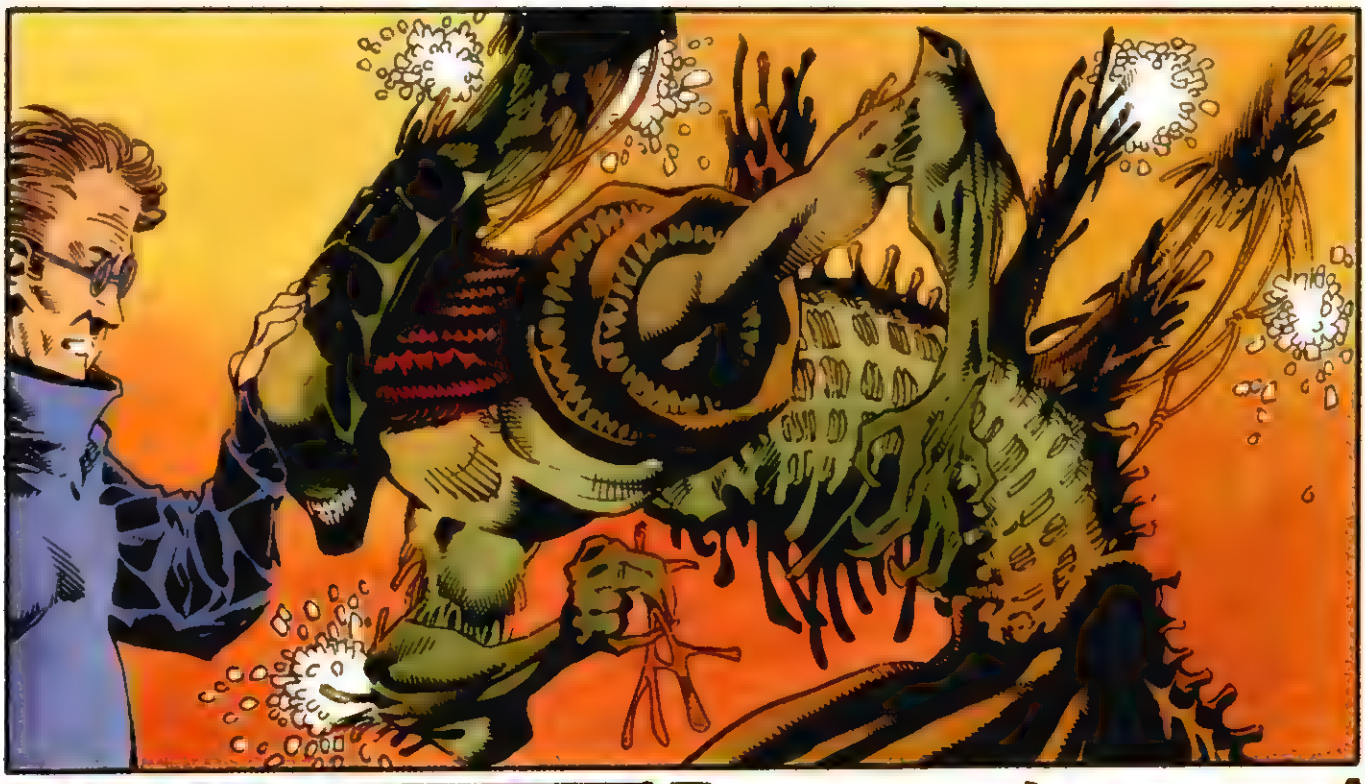
MAC.

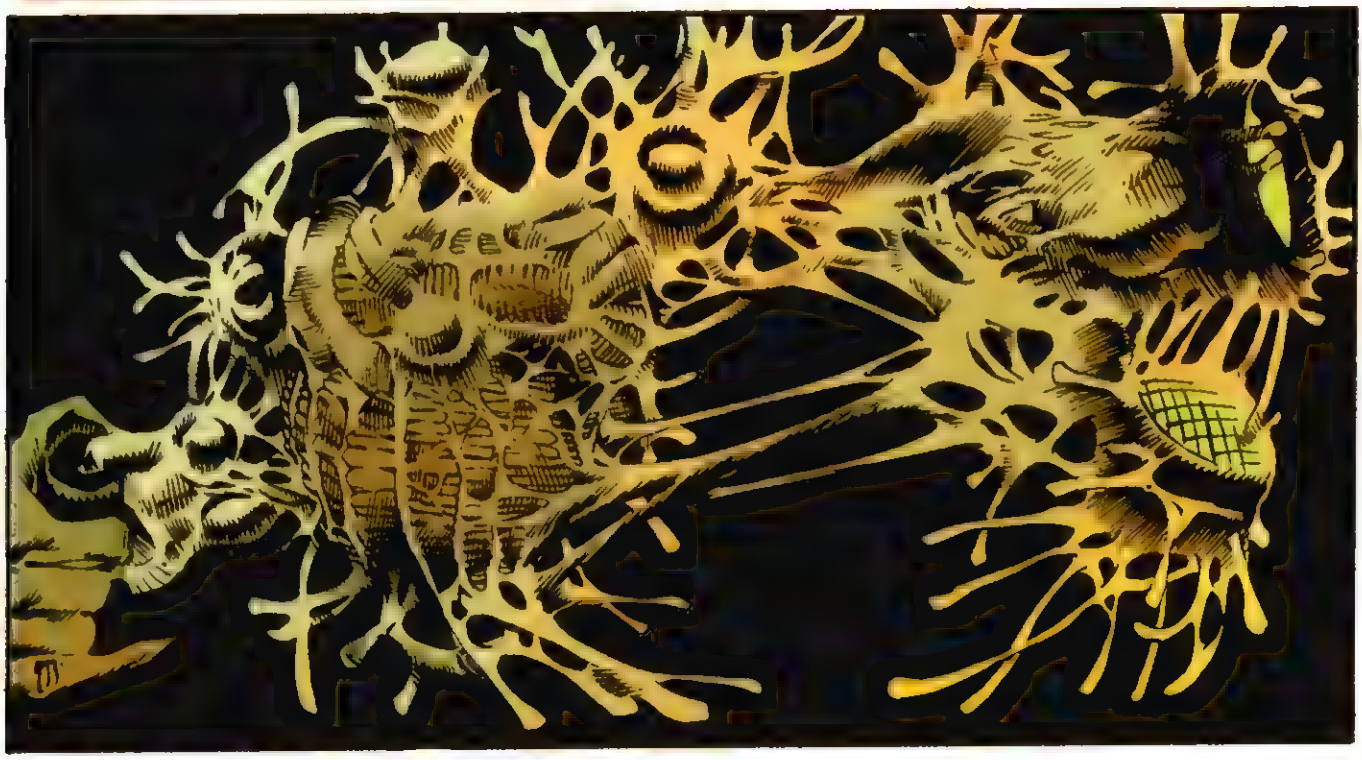
I'LL GET HIS COLLAR. WE MAY NEED IT.

C'MERE.
IT'S OKAY, I'VE GOT...
YAAAAAAA!

SSSSSS
MY GOD, THEY CAN SEE HIM.
NO, GODDAMMIT!
LOCK AND LOAD, GILL! LET'S GIVE THESE CRABS A DOSE!

UHHHH
WHAT? WHERE AM I? SHOTS?
MAYAKOVSKY'S HEART POUNDS. HOWEVER, HE FEELS NO PAIN FOR THE FIRST TIME IN A LONG TIME. SO CLOSE TO DEATH. SO GLAD TO BE ALIVE.
ALONE, HE THINKS OF JULIE'S SOFT VOICE...UNTIL HE HEARS SOMETHING ELSE.
HELLO, DOCTOR MAYAKOVSKY.





When asked why an ant needed to be equipped with a miniaturized cold plasma laser, Mayakovsky answered: "I'd want one."
From *Cyberantics* by Stanislaw Mayakovsky.

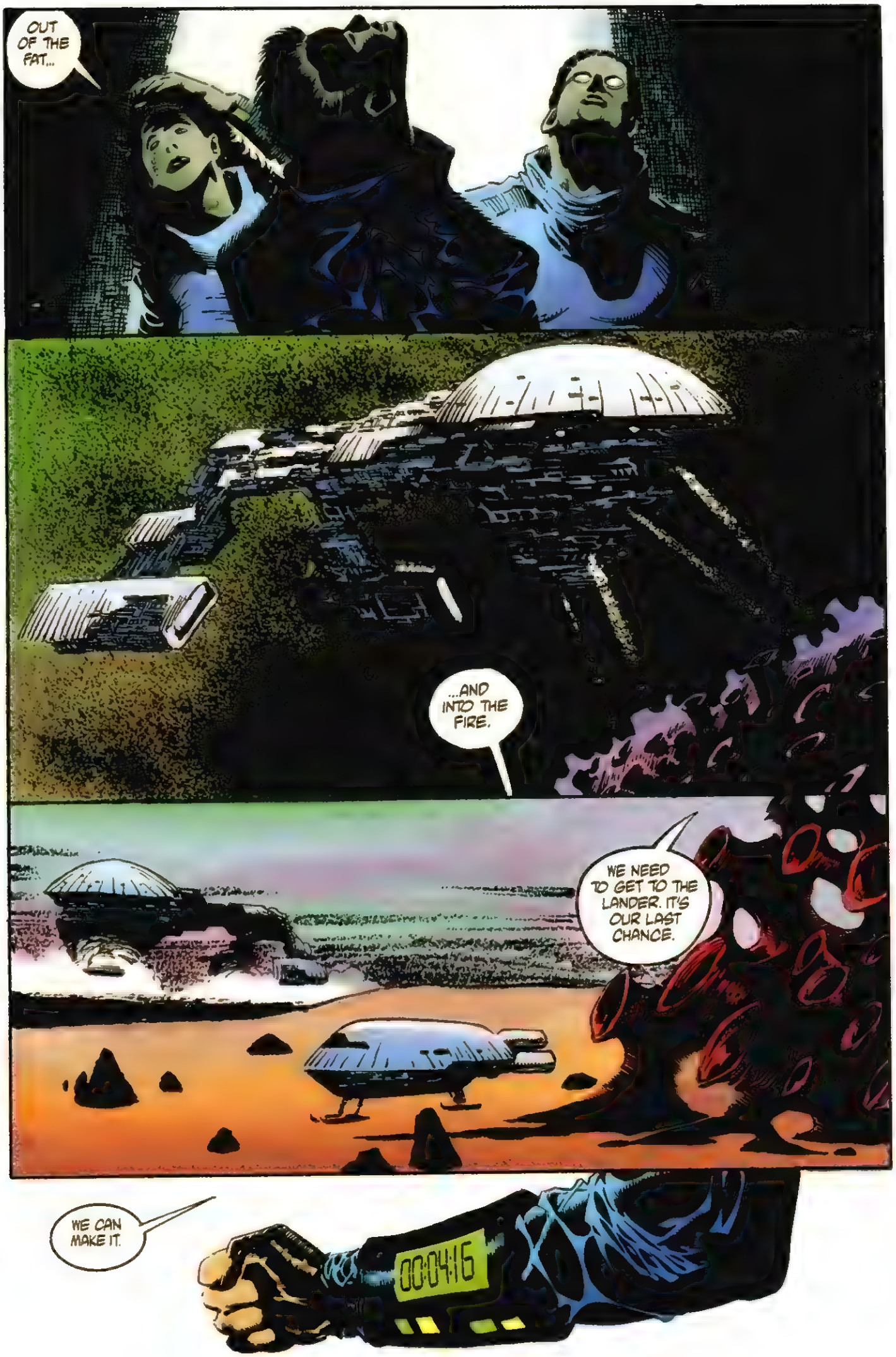
STAN! HERE, TAKE MY HAND.

I SHALL PROTECT YOUR RETREAT, MS. LISH.

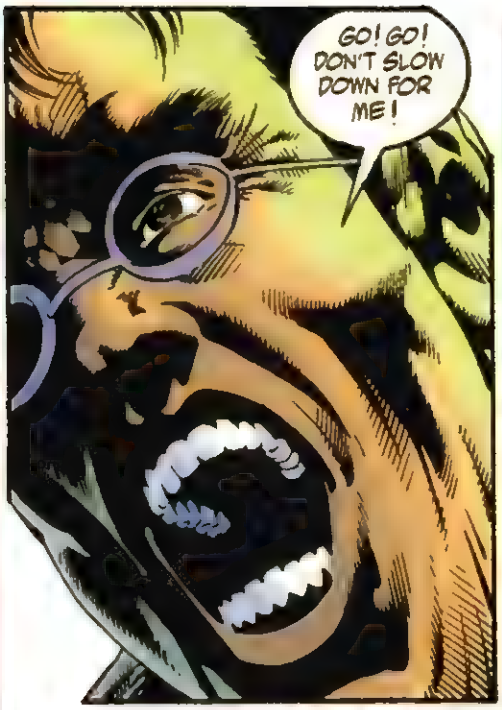
00:07:23

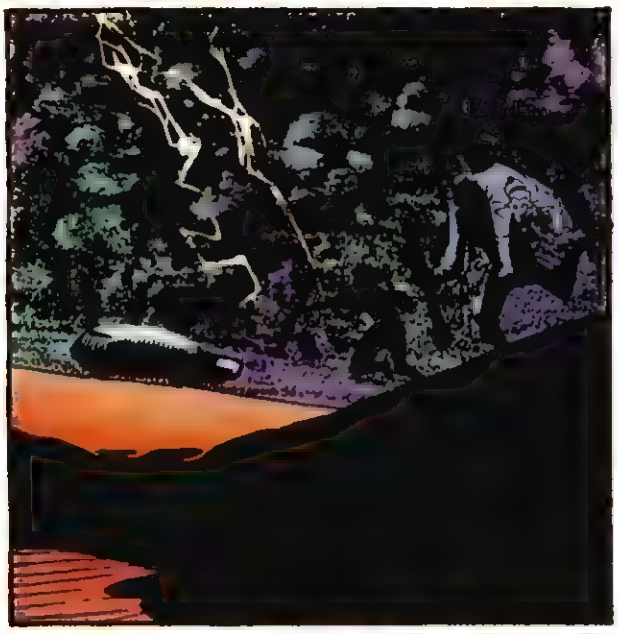
C'MON--LET'S GET OUT OF HERE!

I FEEL A DRAFT.
THIS COULD BE A "CHIMNEY" TO HELP REGULATE THE INTERNAL HEAT AND HUMIDITY OF THE HIVE. IF SO, IT WILL TAKE US TO THE EXTERIOR.
STAN, WHERE'S NORBERT?
HE'S DOING THE BEST HE CAN. HE'S BROKEN.
THEY'RE COMING CLOSER.
WHERE'S THAT LIGHT COMING FROM?


OUT OF THE FAT...
...AND INTO THE FIRE.
WE NEED TO GET TO THE LANDER. IT'S OUR LAST CHANCE.
WE CAN MAKE IT.
00:04:16

HURRY, STAN!


GO! GO! DON'T SLOW DOWN FOR ME!



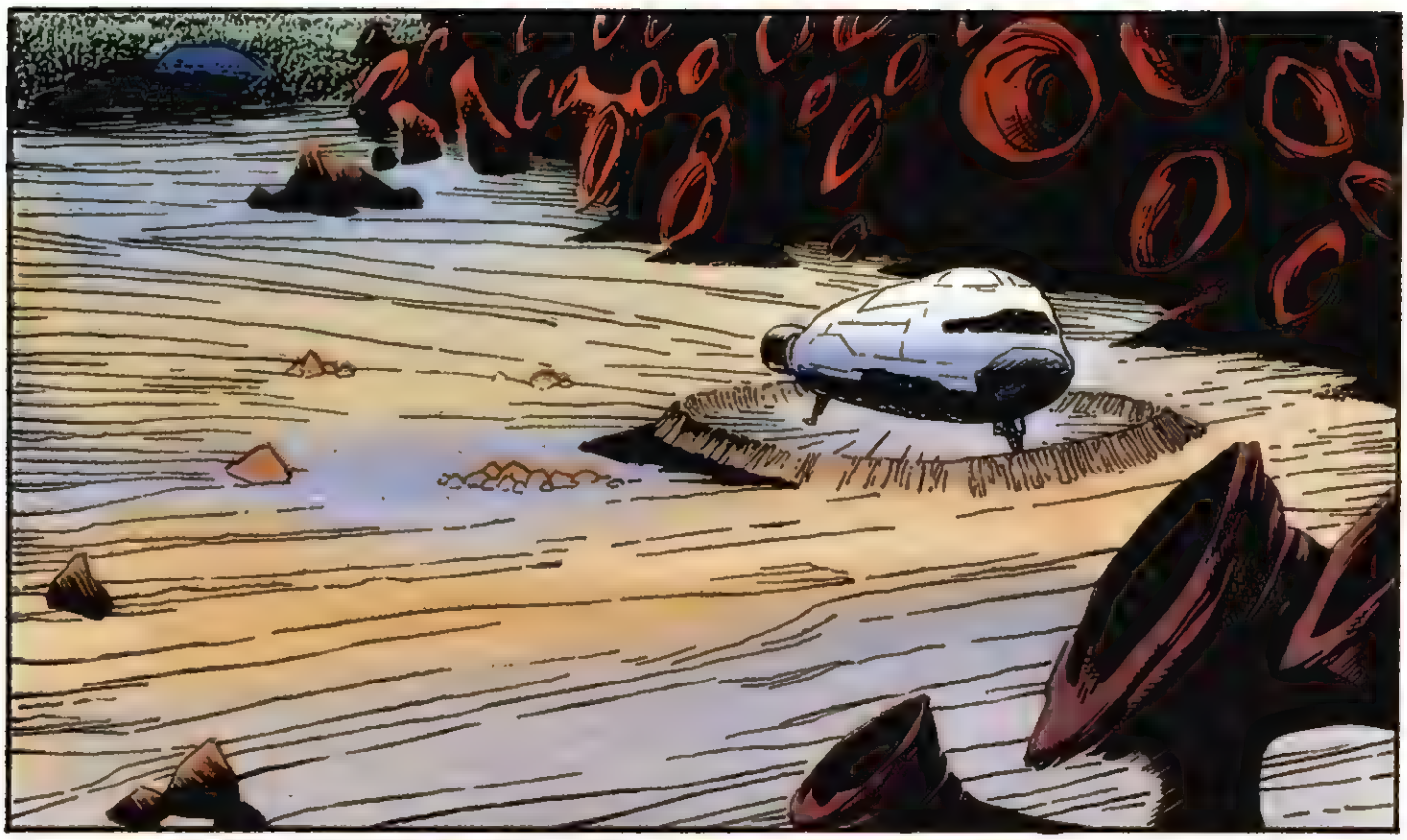
0:0:00

GILL!
GET INSIDE! HURRY!
AAAAAA

CAN YOU SEAL IT?
YES, THE DAMAGE IS NOT TOO EXTENSIVE. I'M TAKING THE ARM OFFLINE.
SON OF A BITCH!
YAAAA!
FSSSSS

JULIE, COME ON!
BUDDA BUDDA
GET BACK!

GAAAH
JULIE!
STAN! AAAAAA!
THE SIGHT OF THE BLUE SUBSTANCE MAKES HIM SALIVATE.
THE ACRID SMELL BRINGS BACK MANY ASSOCIATIONS.
NOT NOW, HE TELLS HIMSELF. THERE WILL BE MORE THAN ENOUGH TIME LATER.
EVERY-THING'S GOING TO BE FINE.
REST. I'M HERE.



THEY'VE SET UP THEIR PERIMETER DEFENSES. I DON'T THINK WE'LL HAVE LONG TO WAIT FOR VISITORS.
HOW IS SHE?

NOT GOOD, BUT SHE SEEMS TO HAVE STABILIZED.
GILL, DO YOU HAVE ANY DATA ON ANCIENT GREECE?

NO.
A SHAME. THERE ARE SOME BENEFITS TO A CLASSICAL EDUCATION. I THINK YOU AND I SHOULD HAVE THAT LITTLE TALK. NOW.

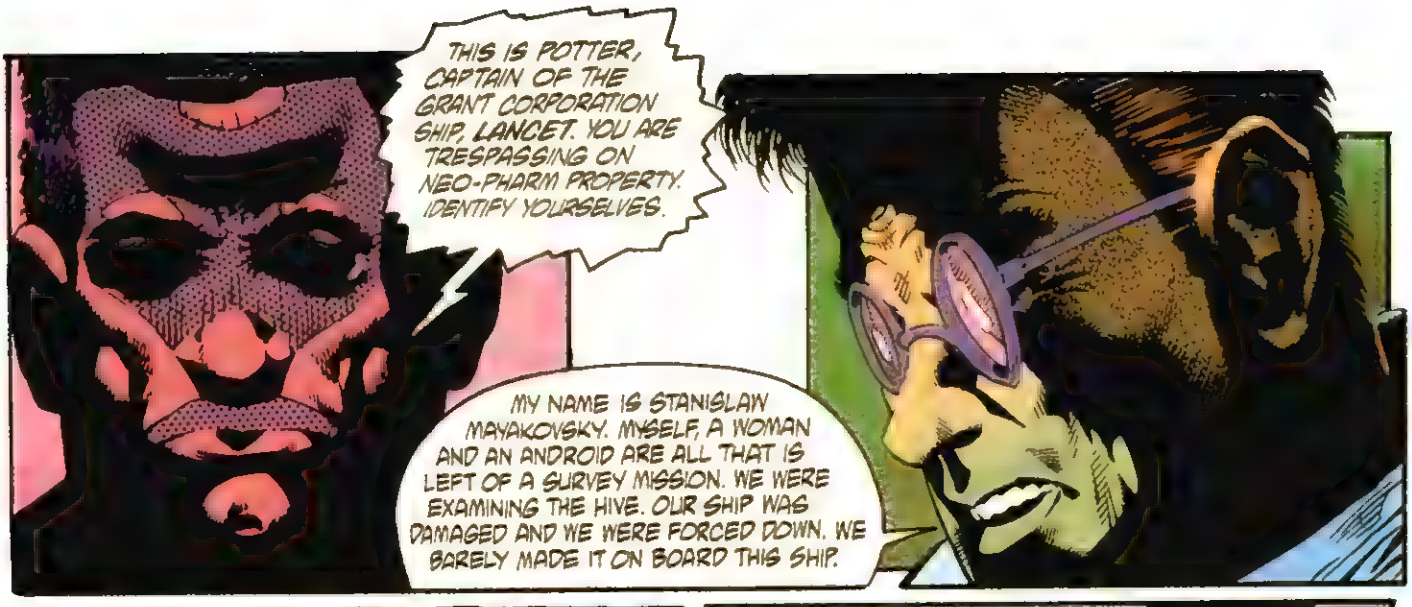
HOW DO YOU FEEL?

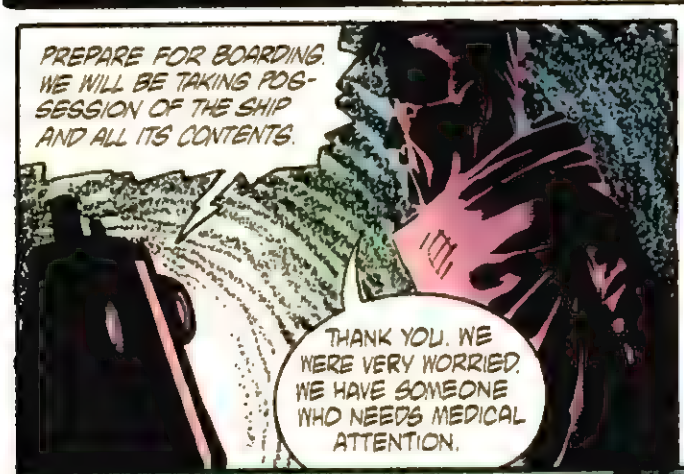
CONFUSED, EXHILARATED ..HARD TO DESCRIBE.

IT'S CALLED FREEDOM. WE'LL DISCUSS SOME OF THE RAMIFICATIONS LATER.
HOW'S THE WRIST?
STIFF. WHAT HAPPENED?

YOU FELL AND INJURED YOURSELF. DON'T THINK ANY MORE ABOUT IT.
SHE SEEMS TO FEEL NO PAIN.
IT'S THE JELLY. HUMANS HAVE WAYS OF REPROGRAMMING OURSELVES, AS WELL.

VZZZZV


THIS IS POTTER, CAPTAIN OF THE GRANT CORPORATION SHIP, LANCET. YOU ARE TRESPASSING ON NEO-PHARM PROPERTY. IDENTIFY YOURSELVES.
MY NAME IS STANISLAW MAYAKOVSKY. MYSELF, A WOMAN AND AN ANDROID ARE ALL THAT IS LEFT OF A SURVEY MISSION. WE WERE EXAMINING THE HIVE. OUR SHIP WAS DAMAGED AND WE WERE FORCED DOWN. WE BARELY MADE IT ON BOARD THIS SHIP.


PREPARE FOR BOARDING. WE WILL BE TAKING POSSESSION OF THE SHIP AND ALL ITS CONTENTS.
THANK YOU. WE WERE VERY WORRIED. WE HAVE SOMEONE WHO NEEDS MEDICAL ATTENTION.

DO YOU THINK THERE WILL BE ANY PROBLEMS REACHING US, CAPTAIN POTTER? I MEAN, THE CREATURES ARE VERY FIERCE...

WE ARE PREPARED.
CLICK

LOOKS LIKE VISITORS.
WE'RE IN A DIFFICULT POSITION. EVEN IF WE COULD GET TO THE COCKPIT AND TAKE OFF, THEY COULD DISABLE US AS SOON AS WE ESCAPE THE PLANET'S GRAVITY AND BOARD US. THE ALIENS PROVIDE US WITH A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF PROTECTION. POTTER'S MEN WILL NEVER BE ABLE TO GET THROUGH THEM TO REACH US.

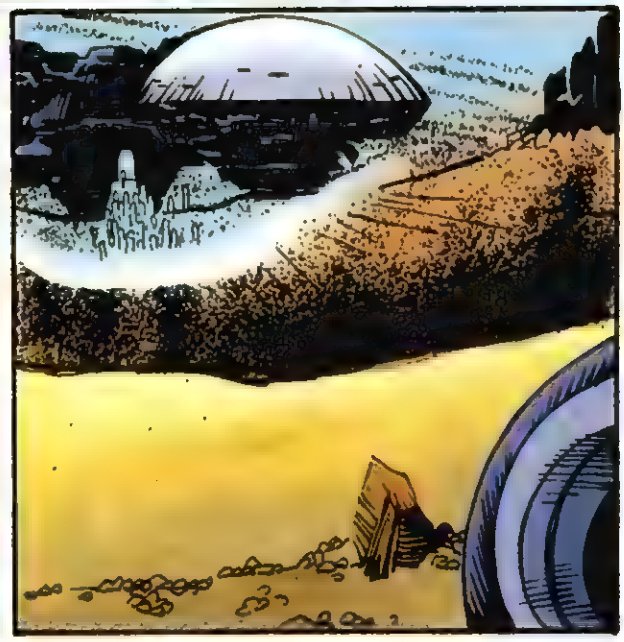
HOBAN, DO YOU COPY?

GILL, PLEASE LET HER REST.

UH, I...

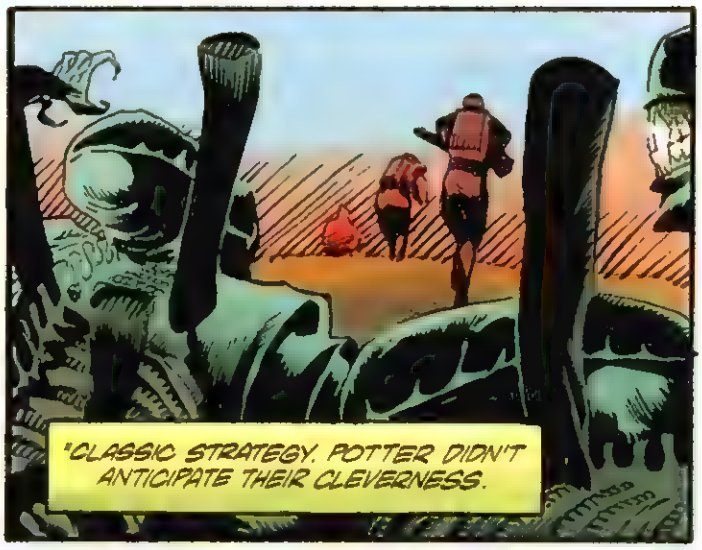
IT LOOKS LIKE I TRIPPED A FEW CIRCUITS TOO MANY.
DR. MAYAKOVSKY, I..
IT'S ALL RIGHT. SHE MAKES ME FEEL THAT WAY, TOO.

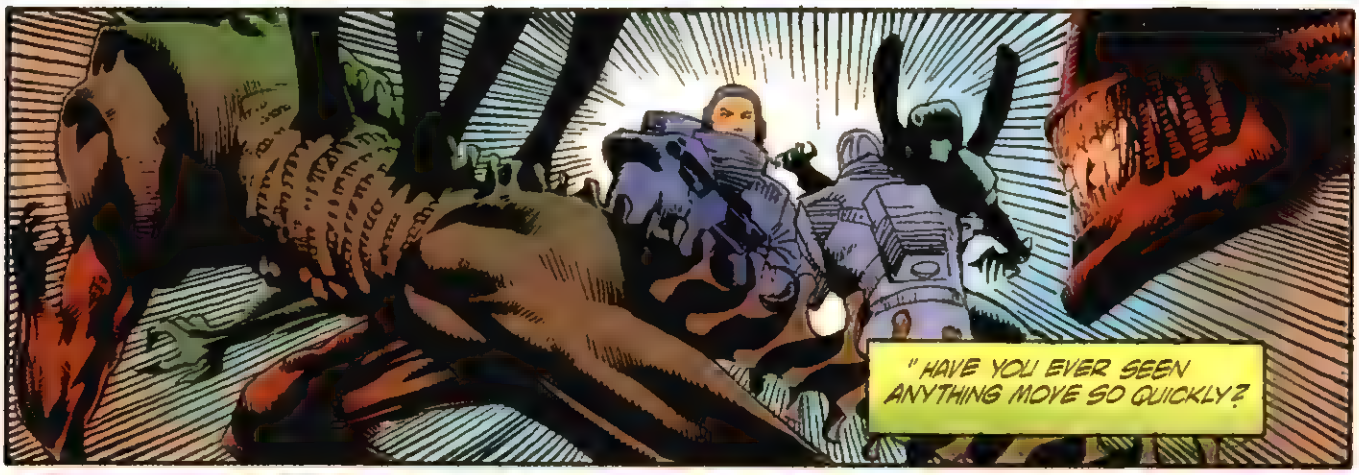
LET'S SEE HOW OUR GUESTS ARE DOING.



"HERE THEY COME.

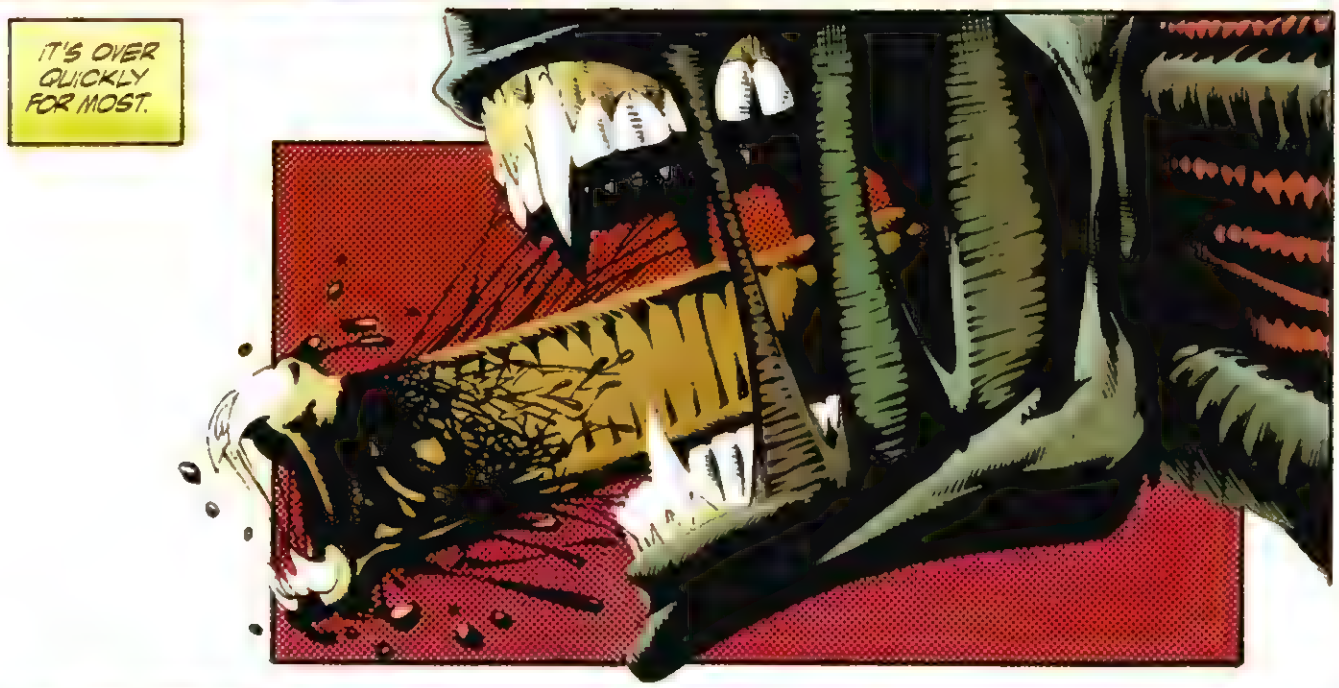
"GILL, THAT IS THE APERTURE THROUGH THE FIELD. DO YOU SEE IT?


"CLASSIC STRATEGY. POTTER DIDN'T ANTICIPATE THEIR CLEVERNESS.


"HAVE YOU EVER SEEN ANYTHING MOVE SO QUICKLY?

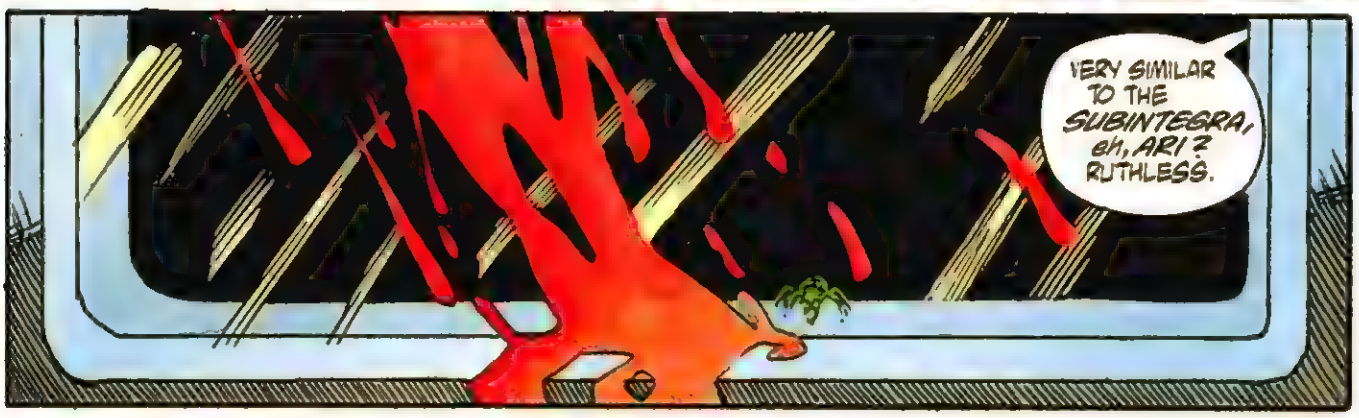
"THEY'LL NEVER EVEN KNOW WHAT HIT THEM.

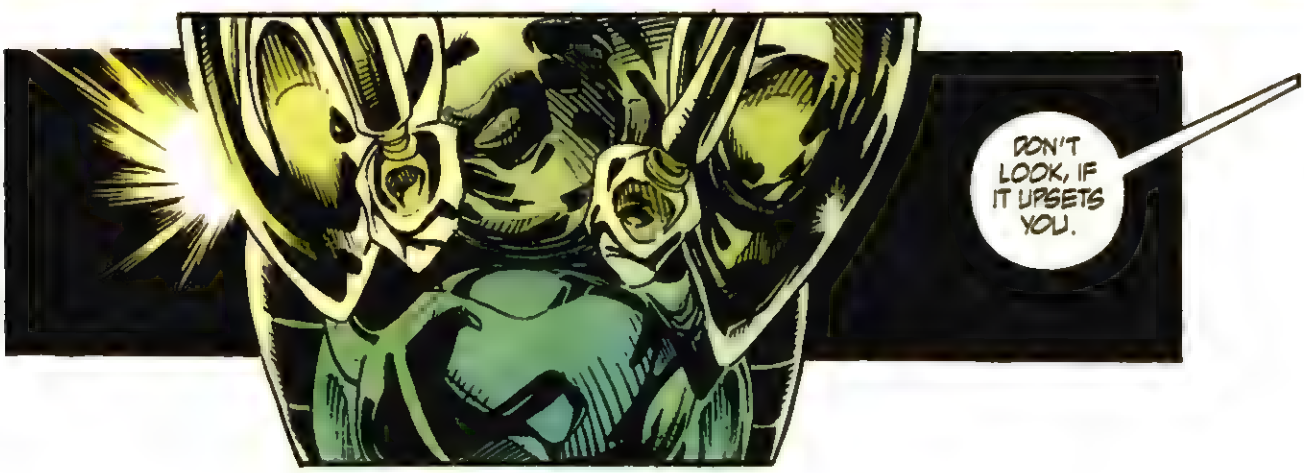
"I WOULD HATE TO ENCOUNTER THE PREDATOR THAT ACID DEFENSE WAS EVOLVED TO THWART."


IT'S OVER QUICKLY FOR MOST.

BUT SOME OF THEM AREN'T SO LUCKY

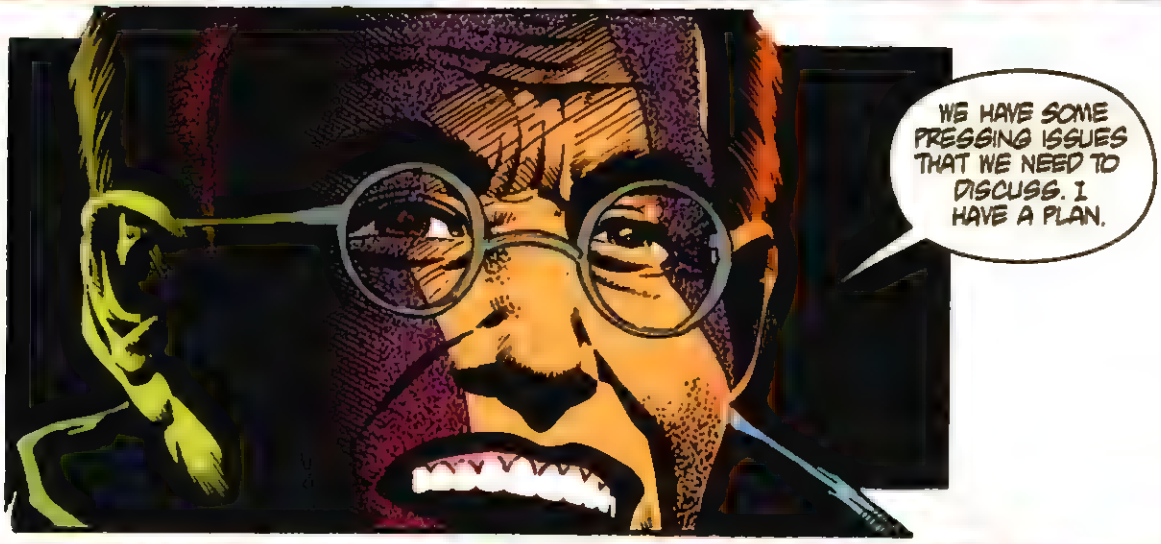
WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE THIS, ARI? IT REMINDS ME OF YOUR ADVENTURES WITH THE SLAVE-MAKING *FORMICA SUBINTEGRA*.
OH, CHRIST! OH, CHRIST! OPEN THE DOOR!
PLEASE! THE DOOR!


VERY SIMILAR TO THE SUBINTEGRA, eh, ARI? RUTHLESS.


DON'T LOOK, IF IT UPSETS YOU.

MAYAKOVSKY! GODDAMN IT! THOSE THINGS ARE KILLING MY MEN!

IT LOOKS LIKE THE CAPTAIN'S ANGRY. I THINK HE FINALLY SEES THE IRONY OF OUR SITUATION.
YES, CAPTAIN. I'VE BEEN EXPECTING YOUR CALL.


WE HAVE SOME PRESSING ISSUES THAT WE NEED TO DISCUSS. I HAVE A PLAN.

I HAVE A FEELING I WON'T BE SEEING YOU AGAIN.

GILL?

WHAT HAPPENED? I.. I DON'T REMEMBER ANYTHING AFTER THE DOOR..GOD, HOW LONG HAVE I...

YOU WERE INJURED. I'VE BEEN TAKING CARE OF YOU.

UH... THANK YOU. WHERE'S STAN?

WHAT HAPPENED TO YOUR HAND?
I DON'T REALLY REMEMBER. I GUESS I FELL
YES, I'LL HAVE HIM GO RIGHT AWAY.

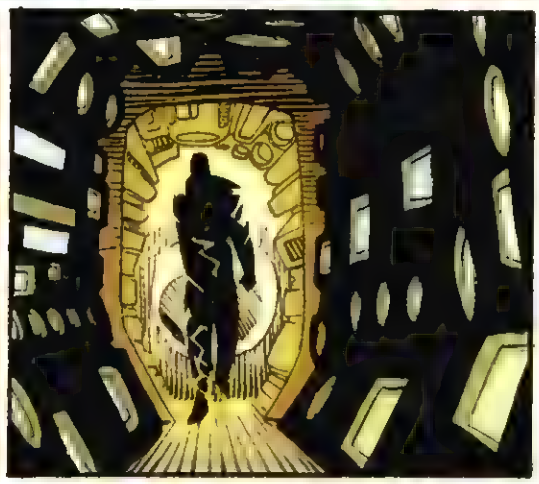
I ASSURE YOU, HE IS A SYNTHETIC. YOU CAN CHECK HIM WHEN HE ARRIVES. HE POSES NO DANGER AND CAN CARRY ON THE NEGOTIATIONS.

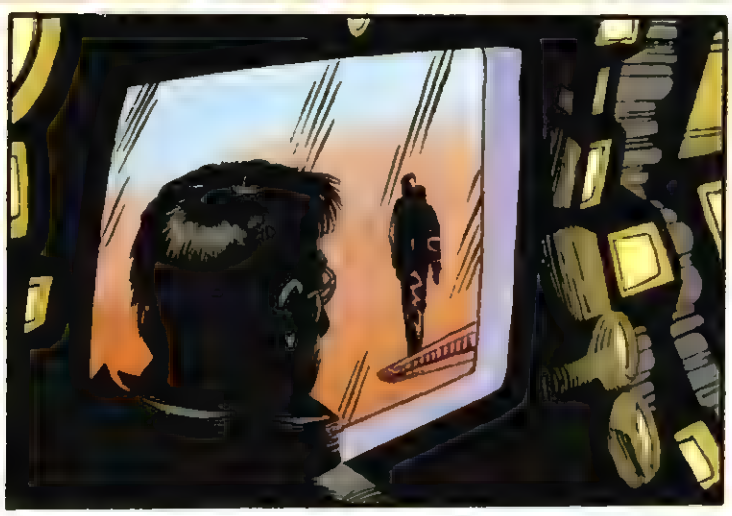
SEND HIM OVER. IF YOU PLAY GAMES WITH ME, I PROMISE YOU'LL BE STAKED OUT FOR THOSE MONSTERS TO PLAY WITH.
FAIR ENOUGH.

I'VE MANAGED TO RECHARGE THIS UNIT WITH SOME JELLY.
00:15:00

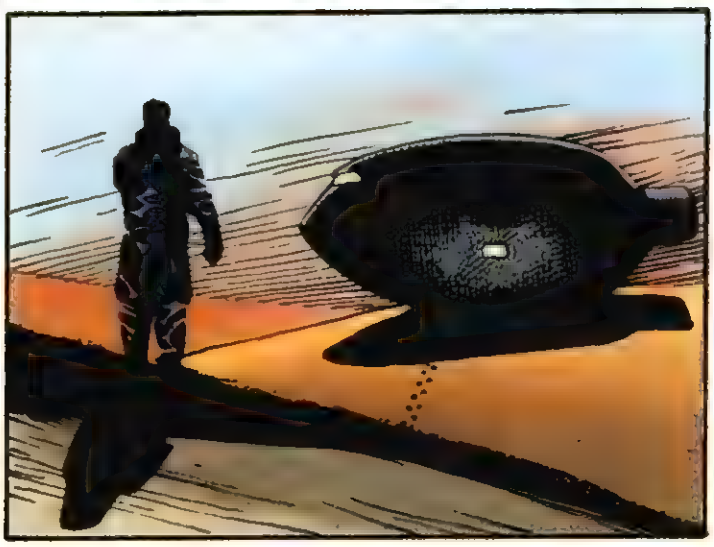
JUST GO OVER THERE AND NEGOTIATE.
TELL THEM THAT I WILL DESTROY THIS SHIP AND ITS CARGO.
TELL THEM I'VE GOT LITTLE TIME TO LIVE, SO I'VE GOT NOTHING TO LOSE.
THEY'LL BELIEVE YOU. YOU'RE A MACHINE. DO YOU UNDERSTAND?
YES, DR. MAYAKOVSKY.

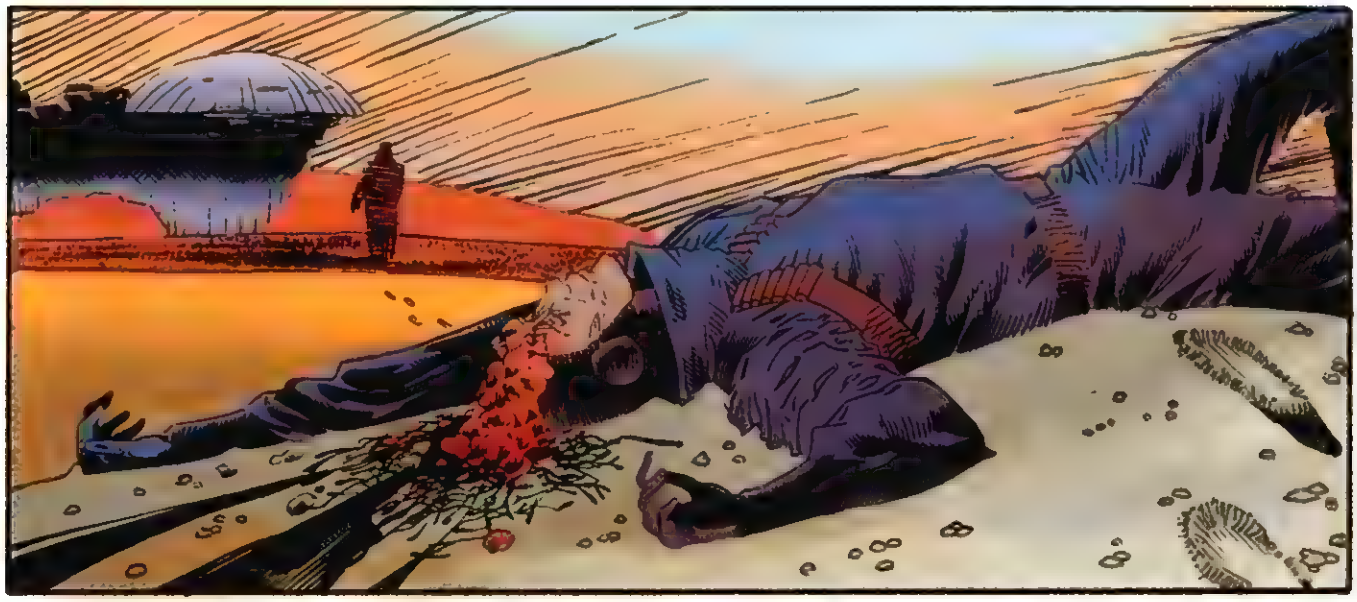
BUY US SOME TIME AND I'LL TRY TO GET SOMETHING WORKED OUT WITH KOBAN TO GET US OUT OF HERE.
PLEASE TAKE CARE OF JULIE..



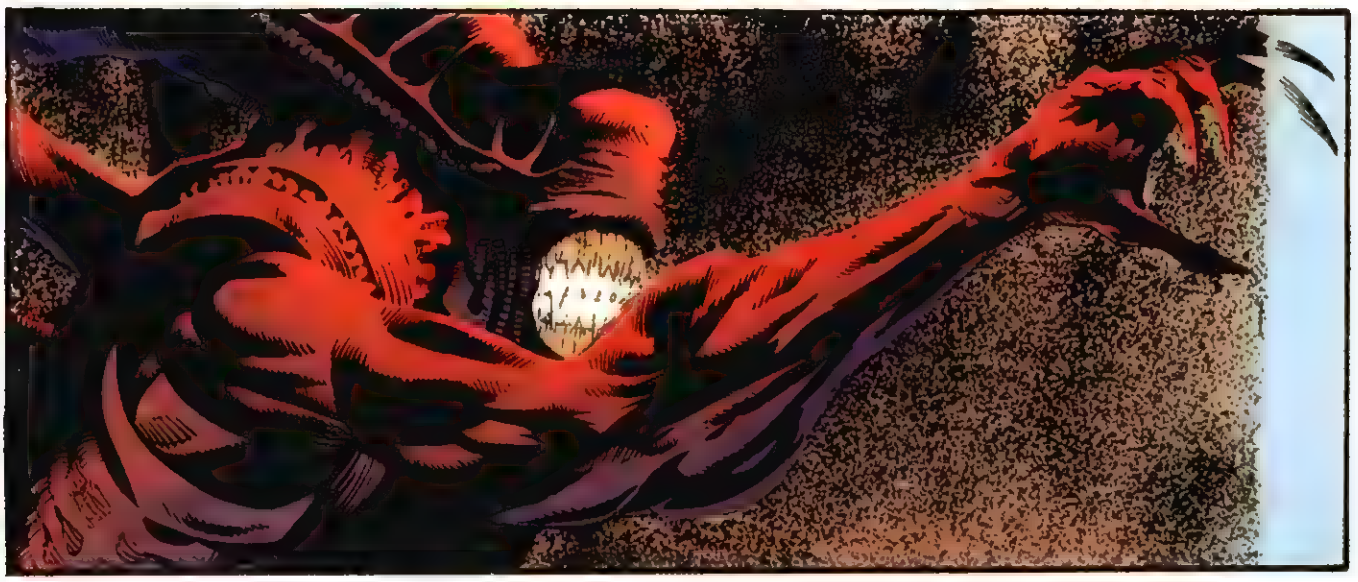


SHE'LL BE FINE, GILL. I PROMISE.

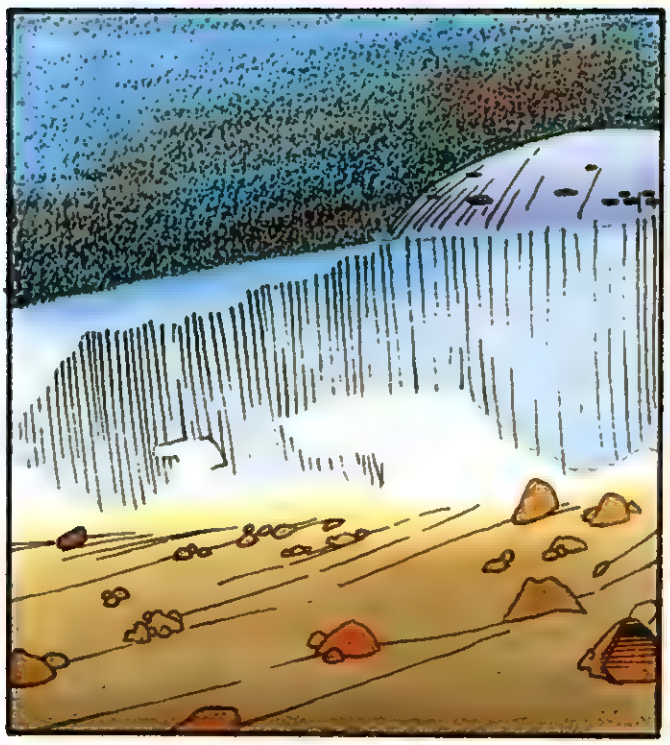


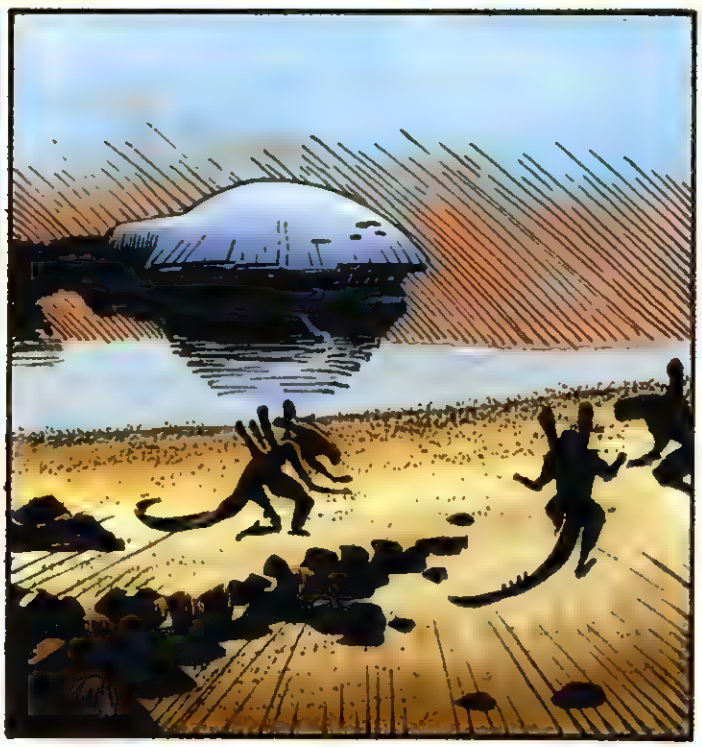


YEAH, HE'S A SYNTH ALL RIGHT.



INSIDE.





THIS IS GETTING WEIRD. NOTIFY THE CAPTAIN.

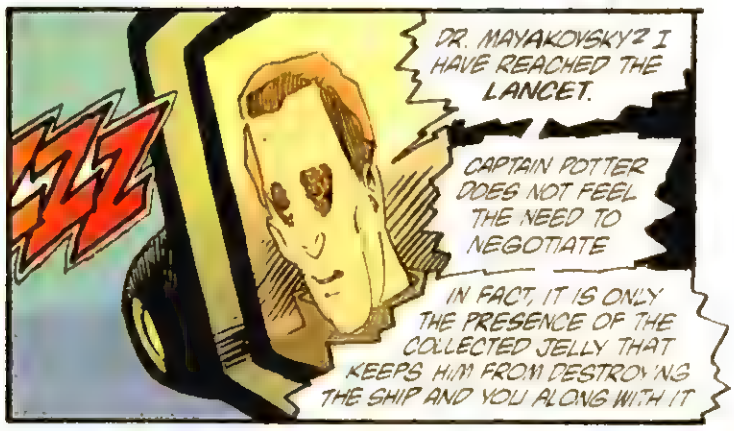
MAN, THOSE BUGS ARE EVERY-WHERE!
HOW DID YOU GET THROUGH ALLA THEM?
I HAVE ACCESS TO ALL THE RIGHT TECHNOLOGY.
THE SYNTHETIC IS HERE, CAPTAIN.
BRING HIM IN.
SIT. I WANT TO GET THIS OVER WITH.

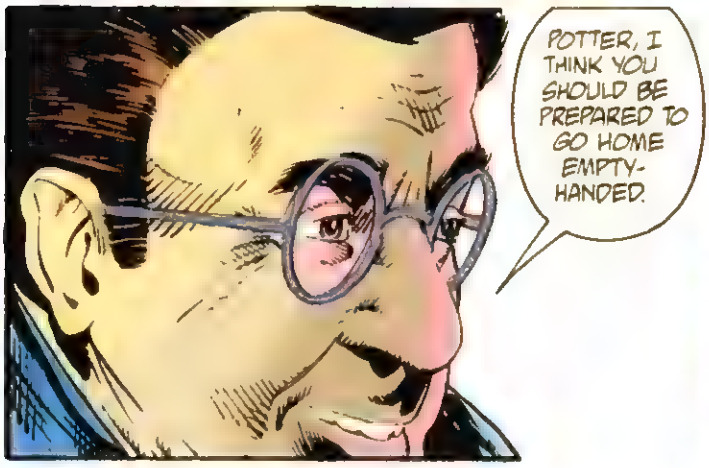
JESUS, I'M FREEZING.
WE'LL GET OUT OF THIS.

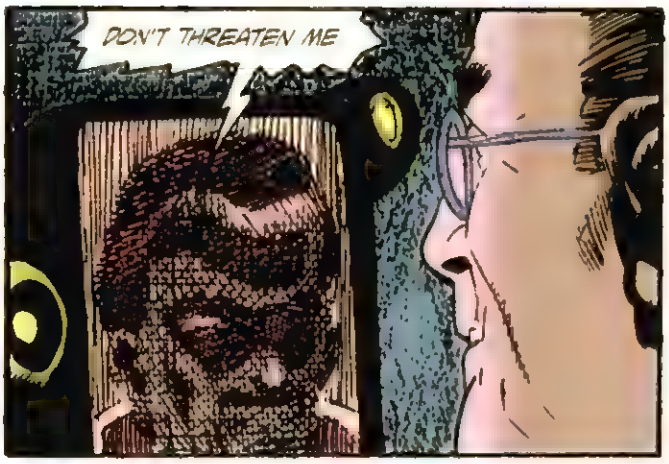
I'M SURE WE WILL, STAN. ONE WAY OR ANOTHER

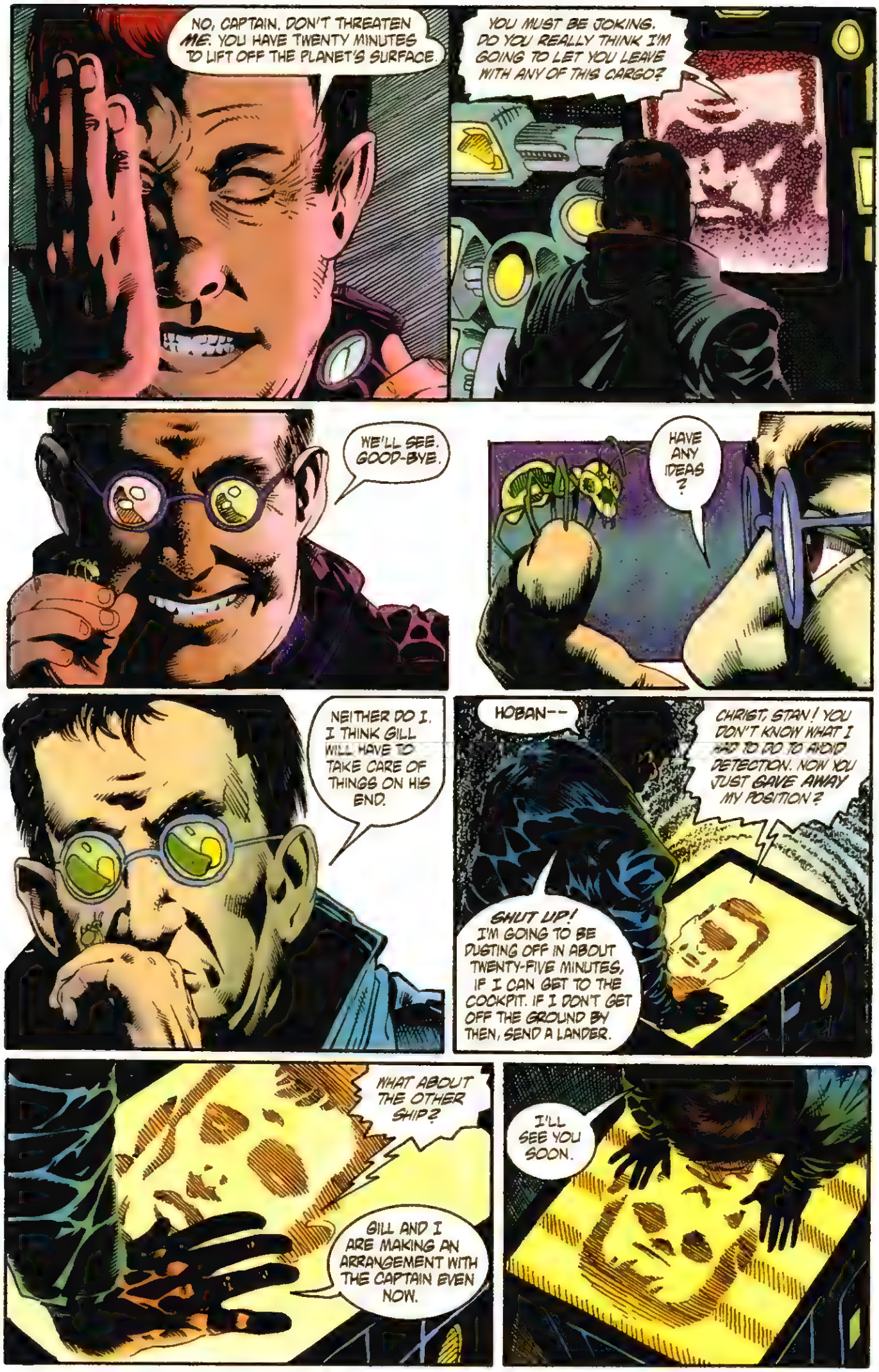
STOP LOOKING AT ME LIKE THAT I'M FINE WE'VE GOT IT ALL. DON'T WORRY.

BZZZZZ


DR. MAYAKOVSKY? I HAVE REACHED THE LANCET.
CAPTAIN POTTER DOES NOT FEEL THE NEED TO NEGOTIATE
IN FACT, IT IS ONLY THE PRESENCE OF THE COLLECTED JELLY THAT KEEPS HIM FROM DESTROYING THE SHIP AND YOU ALONG WITH IT


POTTER, I THINK YOU SHOULD BE PREPARED TO GO HOME EMPTY-HANDED.

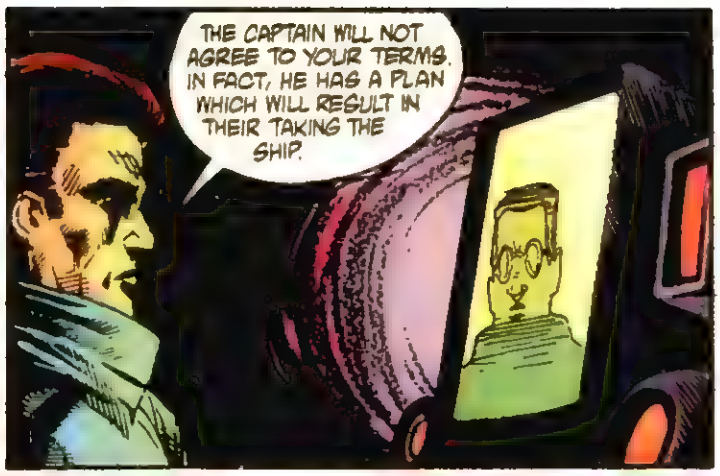

DON'T THREATEN ME

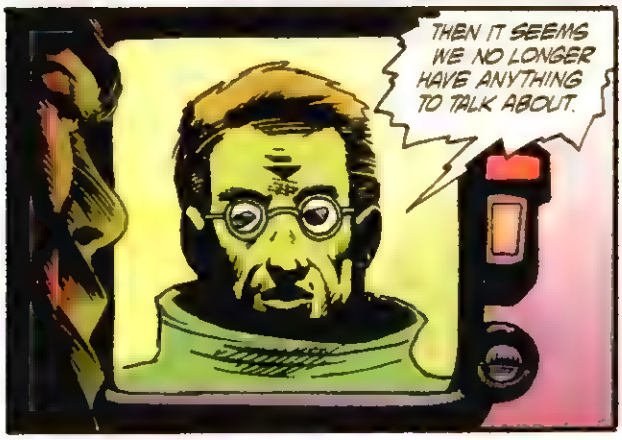

NO, CAPTAIN. DON'T THREATEN ME. YOU HAVE TWENTY MINUTES TO LIFT OFF THE PLANET'S SURFACE.
YOU MUST BE JOKING. DO YOU REALLY THINK I'M GOING TO LET YOU LEAVE WITH ANY OF THIS CARGO?
WE'LL SEE. GOOD-BYE.
HAVE ANY IDEAS ?
NEITHER DO I. I THINK GILL WILL HAVE TO TAKE CARE OF THINGS ON HIS END.
HOBAN--
CHRIST, STAN! YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT I HAD TO DO TO AVOID DETECTION. NOW YOU JUST GAVE AWAY MY POSITION ?
SHUT UP! I'M GOING TO BE DUSTING OFF IN ABOUT TWENTY-FIVE MINUTES, IF I CAN GET TO THE COCKPIT. IF I DON'T GET OFF THE GROUND BY THEN, SEND A LANDER.
WHAT ABOUT THE OTHER SHIP?
GILL AND I ARE MAKING AN ARRANGEMENT WITH THE CAPTAIN EVEN NOW.
I'LL SEE YOU SOON.

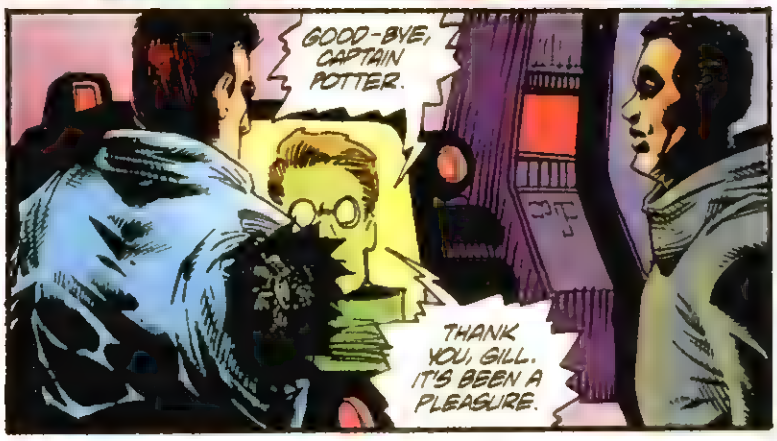
I HOPE SO.
I WANT YOU TO REMEMBER THIS, ARI, IN CASE WE DON'T MAKE IT OUT OF HERE.
DON'T WORRY ABOUT ME. I...WE HAVE SOMEPLACE SAFE TO GO.
DON'T LOOK AT ME LIKE THAT. I KNOW SHE'S NOT GOING TO MAKE IT.
THINK OF ME WHENEVER YOU ACCESS THIS FILE, AND DON'T BE LONELY...
ENGAGE
...WE WON'T.

At first only one or two moved.
But others joined quickly...
An understanding born of ritualized and tactile communication.
Their mass built geometrically until they formed a living wall.*
* From *Cyberantics* by Stanislaw Mayakovsky.
A mute understanding passing among them...

I'M TIRED OF THIS SHIT. I'M GOING TO RAISE LANCET AND REPOSITION SO I CAN THROW THE PERIMETER FIELD AROUND THE HARVESTER.
YOU HAD BETTER BE CONVINCING. ACTIVATE AUDIO.


THE CAPTAIN WILL NOT AGREE TO YOUR TERMS. IN FACT, HE HAS A PLAN WHICH WILL RESULT IN THEIR TAKING THE SHIP.


THEN IT SEEMS WE NO LONGER HAVE ANYTHING TO TALK ABOUT.


GOOD-BYE, CAPTAIN POTTER.
THANK YOU, GILL. IT'S BEEN A PLEASURE.

ACTIVATE SUBROUTINE DIOGENES.

GENTLEMEN, IN THE RICH MAN'S HOUSE...
CRICK

CRAK
...THERE IS NO PLACE TO SPIT...

...BUT IN HIS FACE.
SNAP

BAHWHDOOM

WHAT... WAS THAT? I... I'M HAVING TROUBLE BREATHING... STAN...
BOOM BOOM BOOM
I THINK OUR FRIENDS AT THE DOOR ARE BECOMING AGITATED. THEY SENSE THE CHEMICAL CHANGES FROM THE CREATURES OUTSIDE.

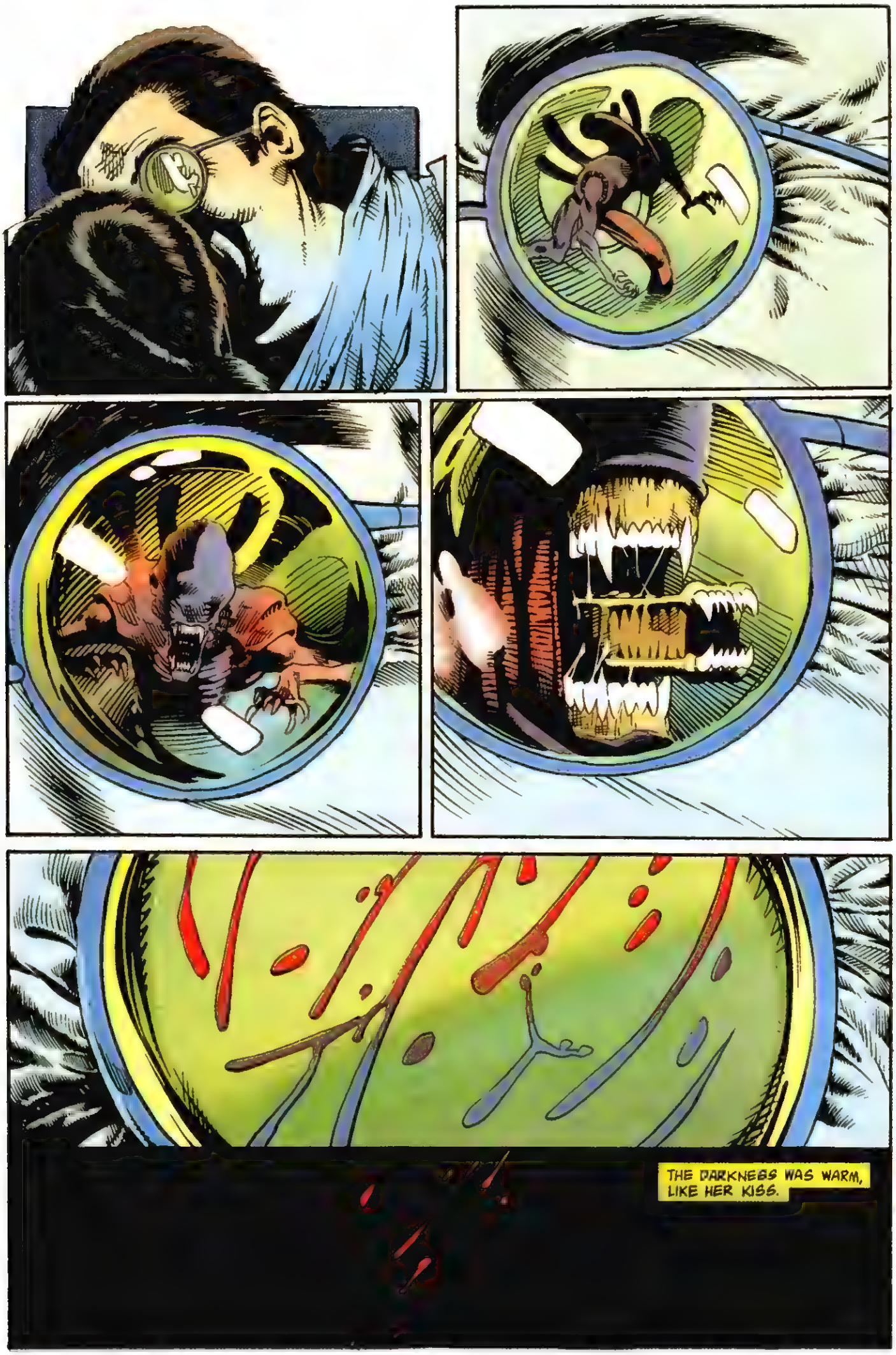
BAM
BAM
BAM
THANK GOD FOR THE NOISE. THE QUIET WAS BEGINNING TO BOTHER ME.
HOBAN WILL BE HERE SOON.
BZZZZZZZZ
JESUS, STAN! WHAT THE HELL WAS THAT?
YOUR CUE. HOW MUCH LONGER 'TIL YOU CAN GET DOWN HERE?
WE'RE STILL FIFTEEN MINUTES AWAY!

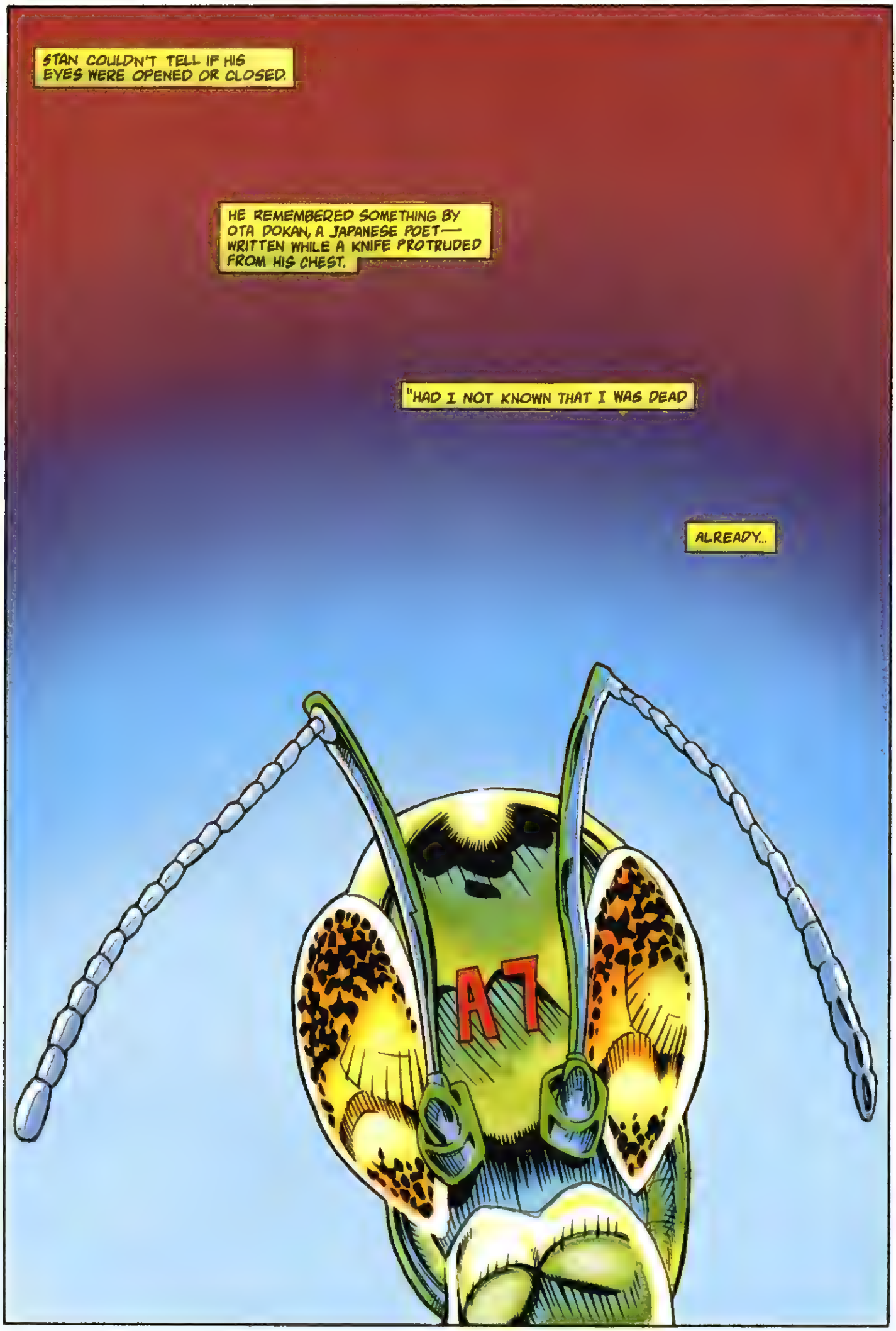
HOBAN'S ON HIS WAY, BUT WE'RE RUNNING OUT OF TIME.
WHEN HE GETS HERE, HE CAN HAVE IT ALL. I DON'T CARE ANYMORE.

I'M SORRY, JULIE. THIS WASN'T HOW THINGS WERE SUPPOSED TO BE.
BUT THERE'S STILL A PLACE WE CAN GO... TOGETHER THIS TIME.

IS THIS THE PLACE YOU WANTED TO REACH THE WHOLE TIME? TO GO INSIDE AND NEVER COME OUT?
IT'S OKAY. TAKE ME WITH YOU. I'M READY.

I'LL REMEMBER YOU THIS WAY ...FOREVER.


THE DARKNESS WAS WARM, LIKE HER KISS.


STAN COULDN'T TELL IF HIS EYES WERE OPENED OR CLOSED.
HE REMEMBERED SOMETHING BY OTA DOKAN, A JAPANESE POET— WRITTEN WHILE A KNIFE PROTRUDED FROM HIS CHEST.
"HAD I NOT KNOWN THAT I WAS DEAD
ALREADY...
A7

"I WOULD HAVE MOURNED..
"...THE LOSS..
"...OF MY LIFE."

COLONIAL MARINES

script
CHRIS WARNER (chapters 1–3)
KELLY PUCKETT (chapters 4–8)
DAN JOLLEY (chapters 9, 10)

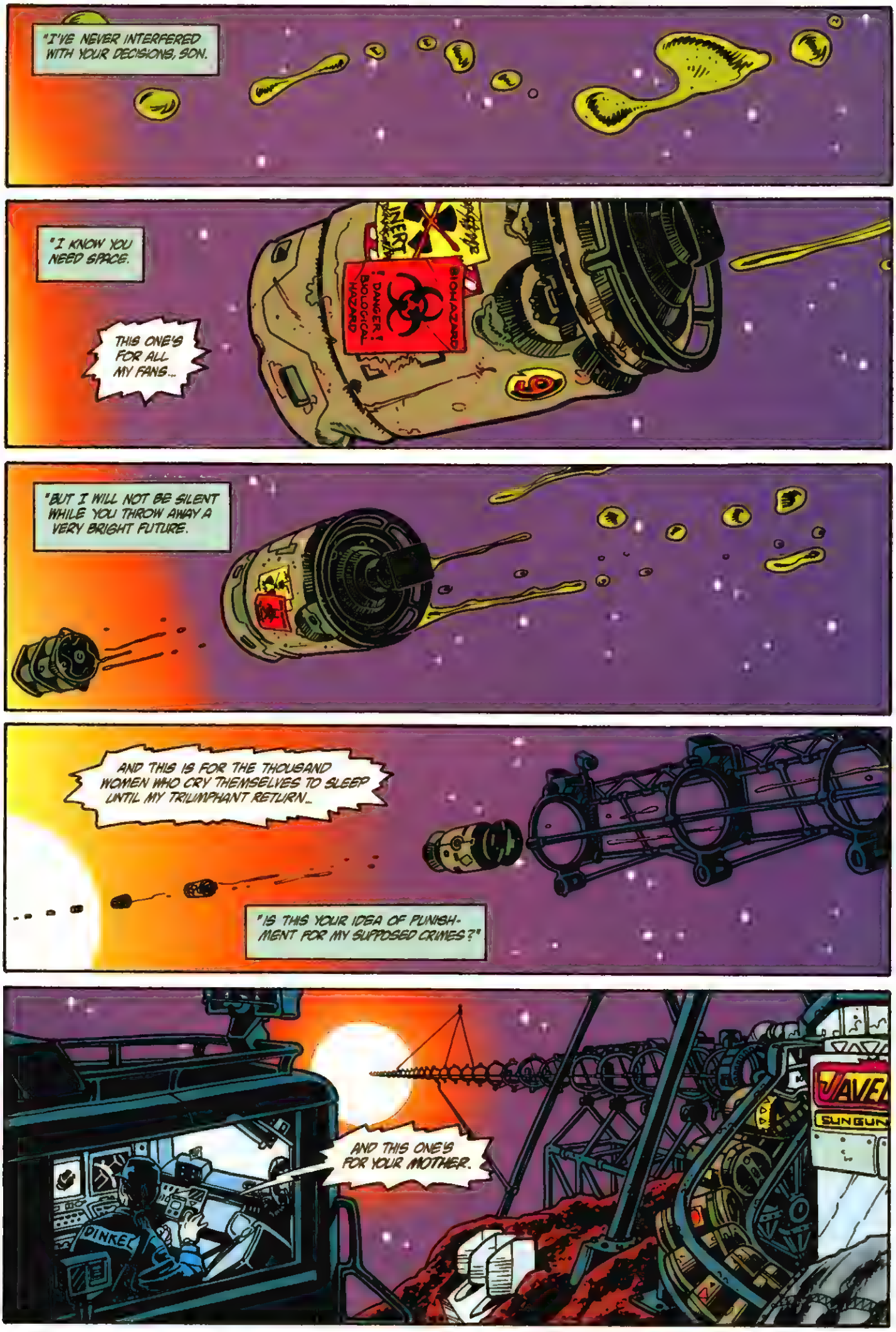
layouts
PAUL GUINAN

pencils
TONY AKINS (chapters 1–3, 7)
ALLEN NUNIS (chapters 4–6)
JOHN NADEAU (chapters 8–10)

inks
PAUL GUINAN (chapters 1–3, 5, 7)
ANDE PARKS (chapter 4)
TERRY PALLOT (chapter 4)
JOHN DELL (chapter 5)
BOB SMITH (chapter 6)
JIM McDERMOTT (chapter 8)
JORDI ENSIGN (chapters 9, 10)

colors
MATT HOLLINGSWORTH (chapters 1–5)
PAMELA RAMBO (chapters 6–8)
DOUG JONES (chapters 9, 10)

lettering
CLEM ROBINS


"I'VE NEVER INTERFERED WITH YOUR DECISIONS, SON.
"I KNOW YOU NEED SPACE.
THIS ONE'S FOR ALL MY FANS...
BIOHAZARD
DANGER! BIOLOGICAL HAZARD
"BUT I WILL NOT BE SILENT WHILE YOU THROW AWAY A VERY BRIGHT FUTURE.
AND THIS IS FOR THE THOUSAND WOMEN WHO CRY THEMSELVES TO SLEEP UNTIL MY TRIUMPHANT RETURN...
"IS THIS YOUR IDEA OF PUNISHMENT FOR MY SUPPOSED CRIMES?"
AND THIS ONE'S FOR YOUR MOTHER.
PINKEL
SUNGUN

HEY, CORCHIANI, DID I EVER TELL YOU SHE'S LOUSY IN BED?

PUNNY, YOUR BROTHER SAYS THE SAME THING ABOUT YOU.

YO, DINKEL... EASE UP ON THE TRIGGER THE COMPANY REP AIN'T DUE FOR 92 HOURS. WHY PRETEND TO BE DOING YOUR JOB NOW?

DAMMIT, DINKEL, YOU'RE GONNA RUPTURE THOSE CANISTERS AND SPREAD THAT RADIOACTIVE PUKE OVER SIXTY MILLION MILES.

I'M SO ASHAMED. GUESS THEY'LL HAFTA' EVACUATE OUTER SPACE.

YOU'LL BE EVACUATING YOUR JOB IF CORPORATE ANALYZES THE COMPUTER LOGS. AND KNOWING BELIVEAU, HE'LL BE CHIN-DEEP IN OUR DATABASE BEFORE HE EVEN TAKES A DUMP.

YOU CAN CUT YOUR RATE BY 30% AND STILL FINISH A GOOD HANGOVER AHEAD OF MONSIEUR BELIVEAU'S GRAND ENTRANCE.

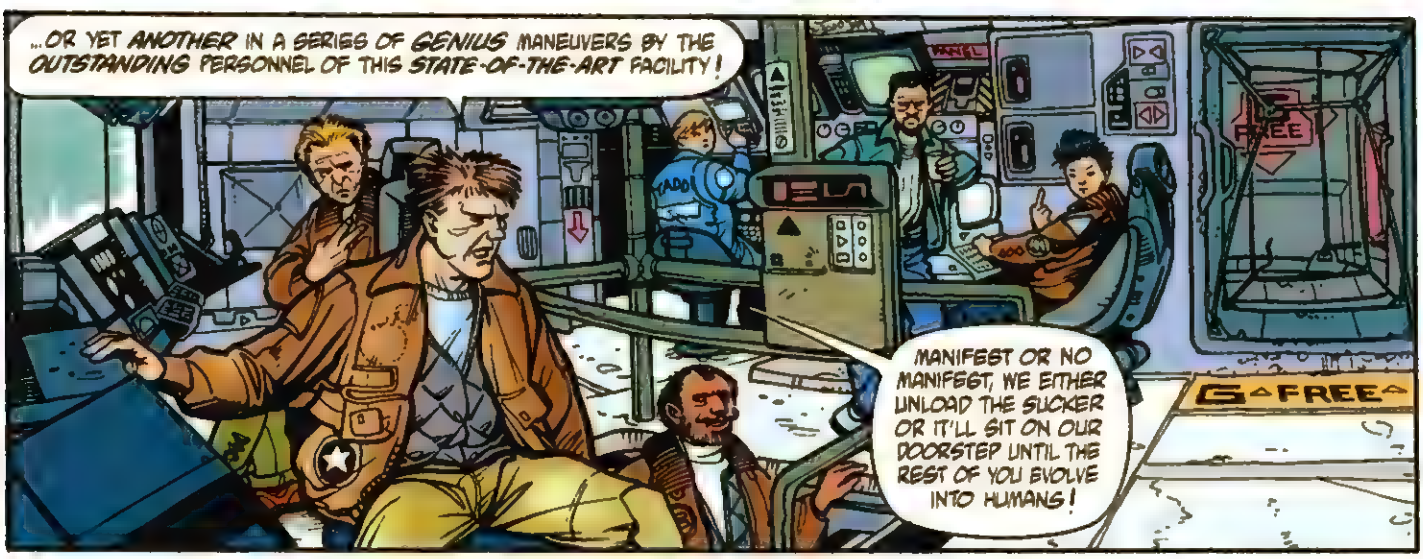
GUESS AGAIN, COOCH. I'M PICKING UP A TRANSPONDER SIGNAL. LOOKS LIKE THE MELVILLE LEFT EARLY TO BEAT TRAFFIC. E.T.A.--140 MINUTES.

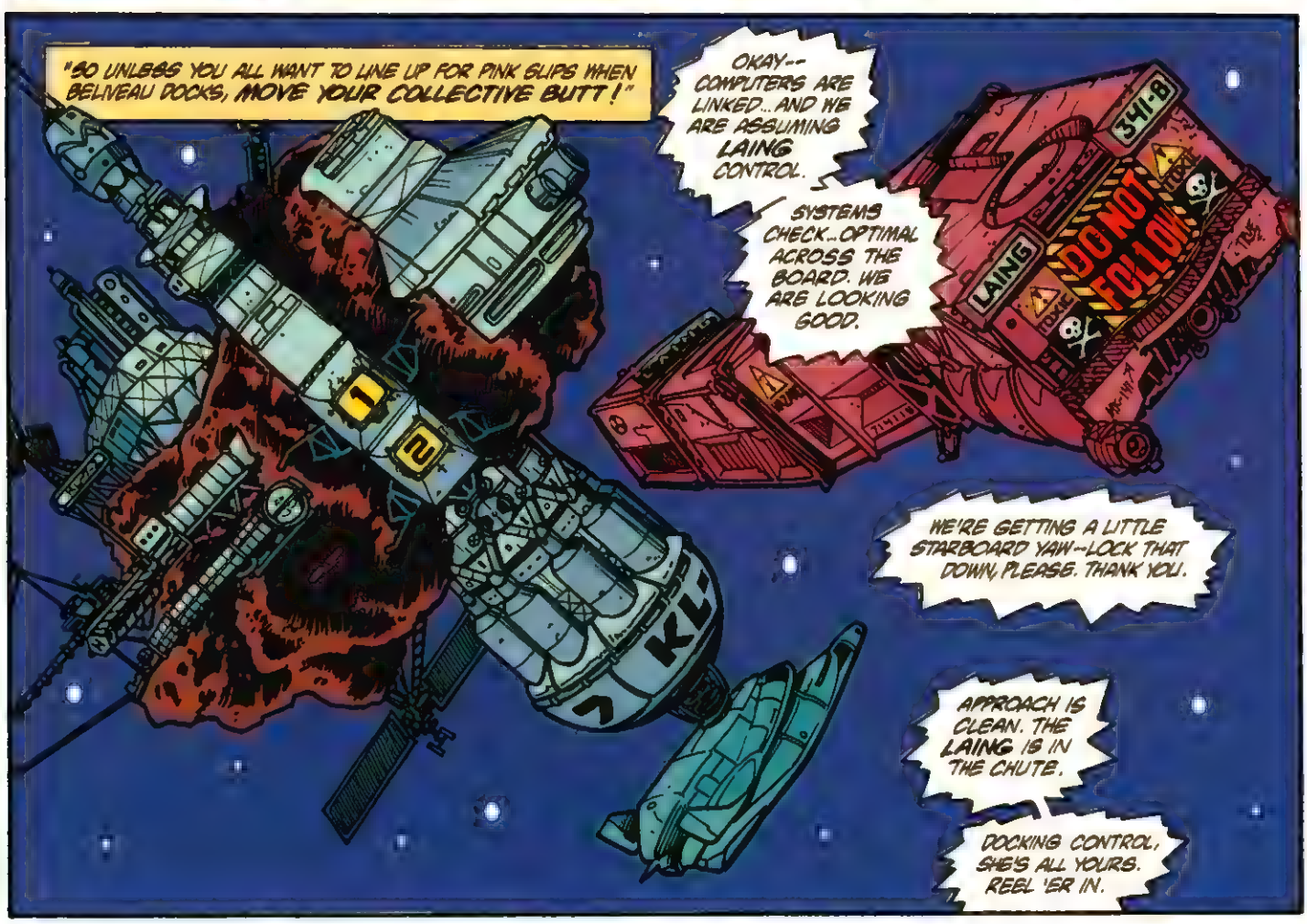
DAMN!

OH, MAN... THE TOX-BAY'S STILL STANDING-ROOM-ONLY. IF THE MELVILLE CAN'T OFFLOAD, THAT FROG BASTARD'S GONNA HAVE MY ASS IN A SANDWICH!

WHY IS IT ALWAYS ME?

EMARDT, YOU IDIOT --THAT ISN'T THE MELVILLE CALL SIGN.
IT'S..THE LAING. UNMARKED CARGO TRANSPORT..OUT OF SOME RESEARCH FACILITY I NEVER HEARD OF..CARRYING BIOHAZARDS AND THE USUAL SLOP.
IT AIN'T ON THE MANIFEST.
I KNOW IT AIN'T ON THE MANIFEST. I LOG THE MANIFEST.
IT'S PROBABLY A CORPORATE FOUL UP..


...OR YET ANOTHER IN A SERIES OF GENIUS MANEUVERS BY THE OUTSTANDING PERSONNEL OF THIS STATE-OF-THE-ART FACILITY!
MANIFEST OR NO MANIFEST, WE EITHER UNLOAD THE SUCKER OR IT'LL SIT ON OUR DOORSTEP UNTIL THE REST OF YOU EVOLVE INTO HUMANS!
FREE
G FREE

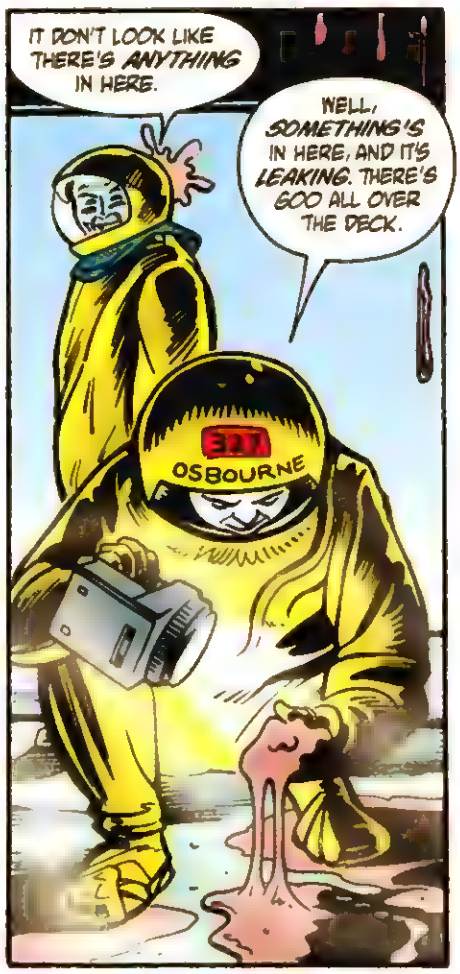

"SO UNLESS YOU ALL WANT TO LINE UP FOR PINK SLIPS WHEN BELIVEAU DOCKS, MOVE YOUR COLLECTIVE BUTT!"
OKAY--COMPUTERS ARE LINKED...AND WE ARE ASSUMING LAING CONTROL.
SYSTEMS CHECK...OPTIMAL ACROSS THE BOARD. WE ARE LOOKING GOOD.
LAING
DO NOT FOLLOW
WE'RE GETTING A LITTLE STARBOARD YAW--LOCK THAT DOWN, PLEASE. THANK YOU.
APPROACH IS CLEAN. THE LAING IS IN THE CHUTE.
DOCKING CONTROL, SHE'S ALL YOURS. REEL 'ER IN.

SCHILLER BIOLOGICAL
FREDCO
LIFT
OSBORNE
YOU ARE SUCH A JERK.
GIVE IT TO ME, BABY --I WANT IT SO BAD.
ROGER, OPERATIONS. DOCKING ALIGNMENT IS ON THE MONEY.
CONTACT IN TEN... NINER... OCHO... SEIBEN...
SADDLE UP, CREW. I'M THERE IN SIXTY.
HEY, OSBORNE. THIS SHIPMENT ISN'T ON THE MANIFEST. ARE WE GONNA GET SOME OVER-TIME FOR THIS?
YEAH, THIS IS DISRUPTING MY ACTIVE LIFESTYLE.
I GOT A HOT DATE WITH A HALF-RACK OF BREW. THE COMPANY BETTER COME ACROSS.
I'LL TELL YOU WHAT, CROENI-- IF YOU HUMP THIS LOAD AND DO A REALLY GOOD JOB...
341
LAING
ONLY

...I'LL RECOMMEND THAT YOU ALL NOT BE FIRED!
OSBO
BOURNE
341
LAING
B
FAIR ENOUGH.
WE LOVE YOU VERY MUCH ...WITCH.

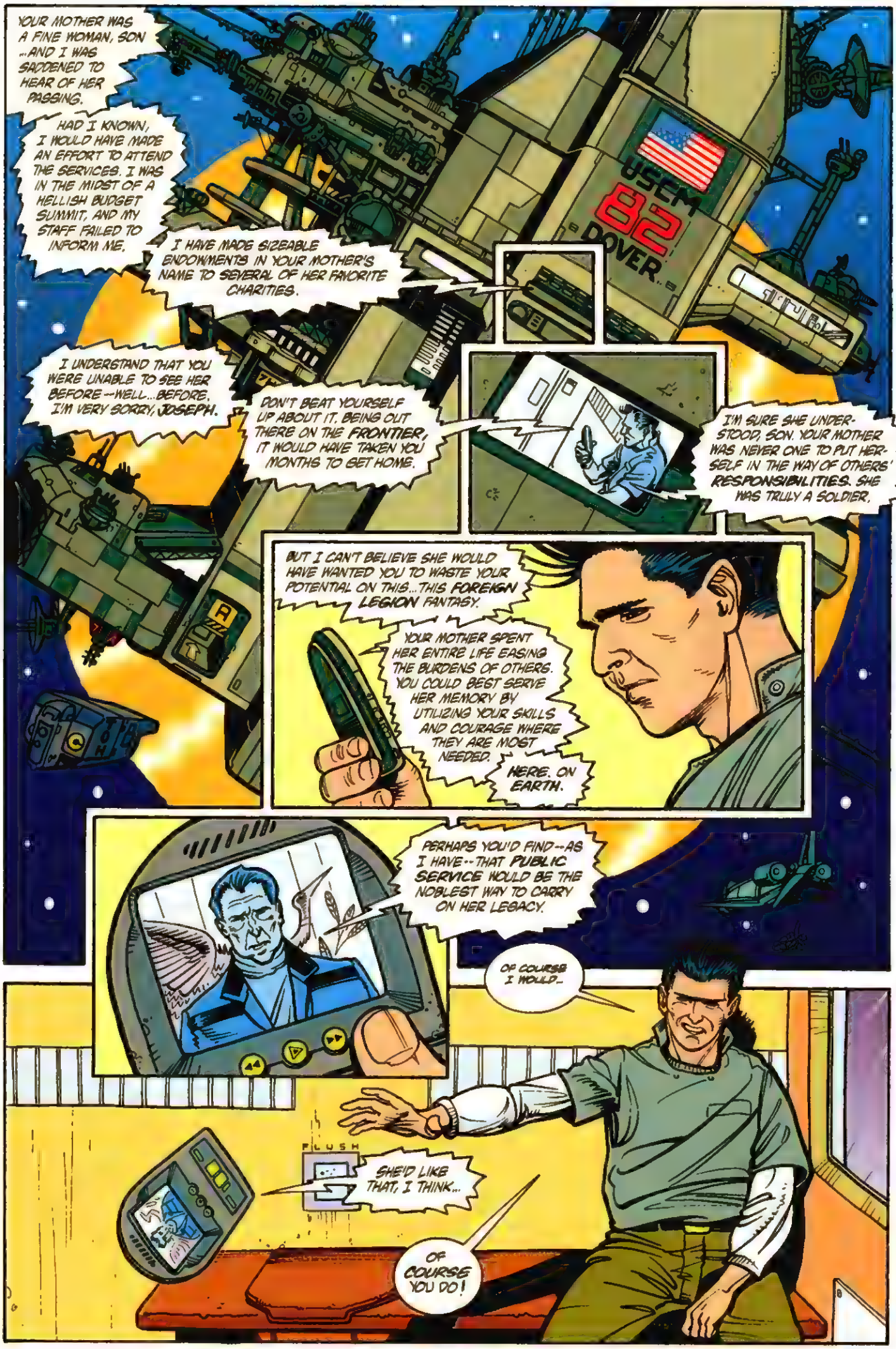
THAT'S MY NAME. DON'T WEAR IT OUT.
LET'S CHECK IT OUT. WE'VE GOT BIOHAZARDS, SO KEEP AN EYE OUT FOR ANY POTENTIALLY COMPROMISED CONTAINERS. WE DON'T WANT ANY OF THAT CRUD LOOSE IN THE STATION.
REMEMBER THAT GREEN FUZZY STUFF THAT GOT INTO THE VENTILATION SYSTEM? STUNK UP THE PLACE FOR SIX MONTHS.
WAS THAT WHAT IT WAS? I COULDA' SWORN IT WAS A PAIR OF YOUR SOCKS.

HEY, MAN... NO LIGHTS!
MIGHT BE A BAD POWER COUPLING FROM THE TRACTOR. AND THIS FOG DOESN'T LOOK GOOD. MIGHT BE PROBLEMS WITH TEMPERATURE STABILIZATION --MAYBE WE'VE GOT SOME CORROSIVES MONKEY-WRENCHING THE WORKS.
CARROLL, FIND THE POWER BOX FOR THE AUXILIARY LAMPS.


IT DON'T LOOK LIKE THERE'S ANYTHING IN HERE.
WELL, SOMETHING'S IN HERE, AND IT'S LEAKING. THERE'S GOO ALL OVER THE DECK.
327
OSBOURNE

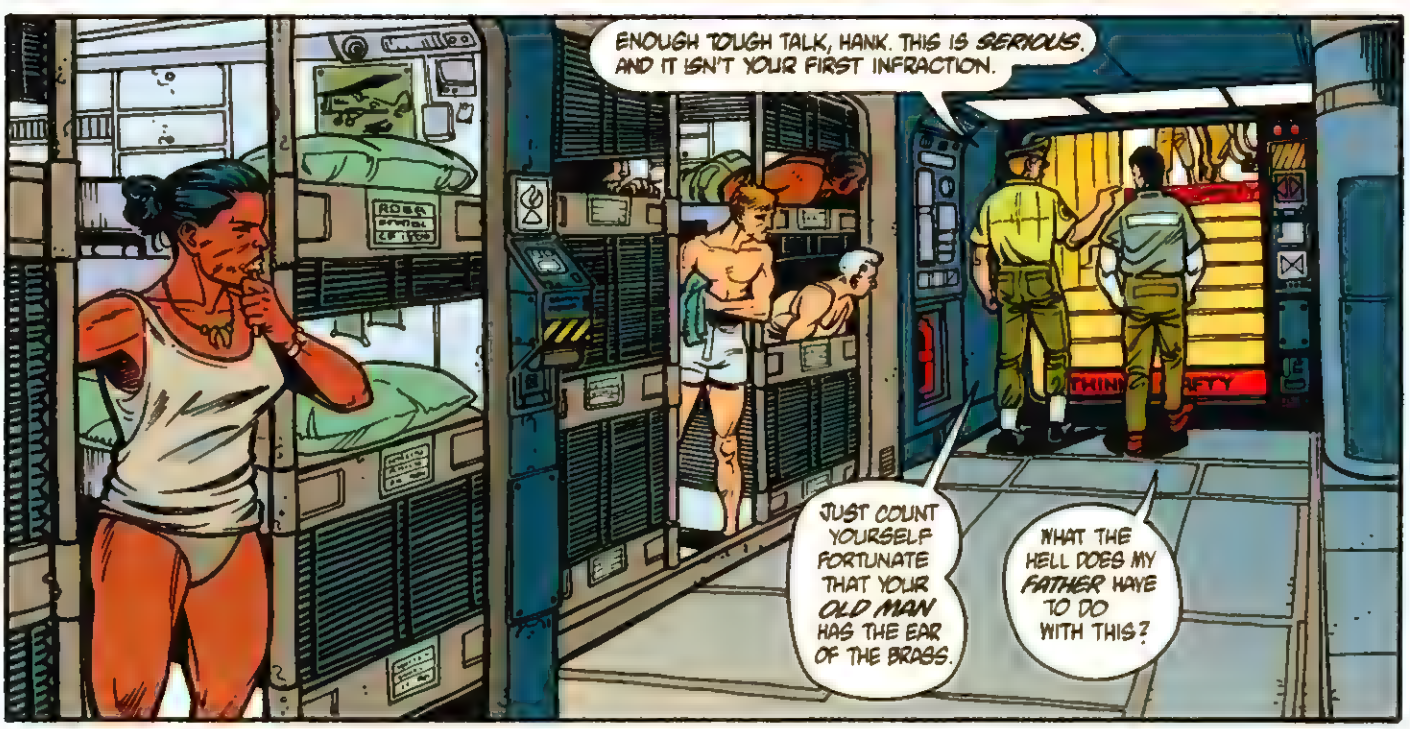
HEY! CHECK THIS OUT! WHAT DO YOU MAKE OF THIS?
I DON'T KNOW...IS IT ORGANIC?
OSBORNE·327
HEY, I'M A STEVEDORE, NOT NO SCIENTIST.
YO! I FOUND THE LIGHTS!

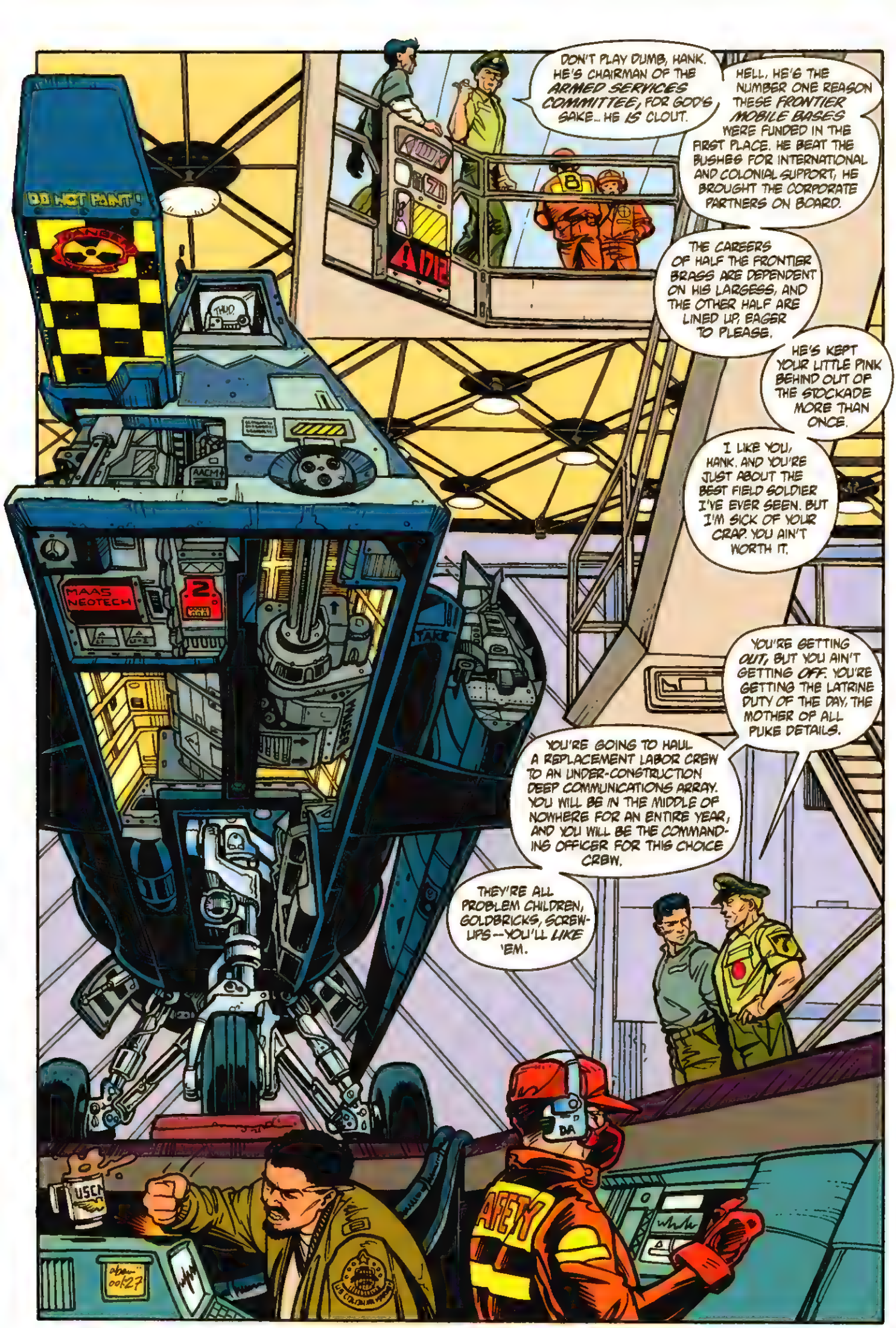
"I'M NOT THE MONSTER YOU THINK HE OUT TO BE.
"EVERYONE HAS A RIGHT TO BE HAPPY. I HAVE A RIGHT TO BE HAPPY.
"YOUR MOTHER ACCEPTED MY DECISION. WE WERE BOTH ADULTS. TIMES CHANGE, SITUATIONS CHANGE, PEOPLE CHANGE. THAT'S THE WAY OF THE WORLD.
...OH, GOD...
"LIFE IS ABOUT REALITY, SON. AND SOMETIMES REALITY ISN'T WHAT WE'D LIKE IT TO BE. SOMETIMES IT ISN'T PRETTY. SOMETIMES, IT'S DOWNright UGLY.
"AND, SADLY, DEATH IS AS MUCH A PART OF REALITY AS LIFE."


YOUR MOTHER WAS A FINE WOMAN, SON ...AND I WAS SADDENED TO HEAR OF HER PASSING.
HAD I KNOWN, I WOULD HAVE MADE AN EFFORT TO ATTEND THE SERVICES. I WAS IN THE MIDST OF A HELLISH BUDGET SUMMIT, AND MY STAFF FAILED TO INFORM ME.
I HAVE MADE SIZEABLE ENDOWMENTS IN YOUR MOTHER'S NAME TO SEVERAL OF HER FAVORITE CHARITIES.
USEM 82 DOVER
I UNDERSTAND THAT YOU WERE UNABLE TO SEE HER BEFORE --WELL...BEFORE. I'M VERY SORRY, JOSEPH.
DON'T BEAT YOURSELF UP ABOUT IT. BEING OUT THERE ON THE FRONTIER, IT WOULD HAVE TAKEN YOU MONTHS TO GET HOME.
I'M SURE SHE UNDERSTOOD, SON. YOUR MOTHER WAS NEVER ONE TO PUT HERSELF IN THE WAY OF OTHERS' RESPONSIBILITIES. SHE WAS TRULY A SOLDIER.
BUT I CAN'T BELIEVE SHE WOULD HAVE WANTED YOU TO WASTE YOUR POTENTIAL ON THIS...THIS FOREIGN LEGION FANTASY.
YOUR MOTHER SPENT HER ENTIRE LIFE EASING THE BURDENS OF OTHERS. YOU COULD BEST SERVE HER MEMORY BY UTILIZING YOUR SKILLS AND COURAGE WHERE THEY ARE MOST NEEDED.
HERE. ON EARTH.
PERHAPS YOU'D FIND --AS I HAVE-- THAT PUBLIC SERVICE WOULD BE THE NOBLEST WAY TO CARRY ON HER LEGACY.
OF COURSE I WOULD...
FLUSH
SHE'D LIKE THAT, I THINK...
OF COURSE YOU DO!

CHASK
STILL BREAKING THINGS, LT. HENRY? AT LEAST IT ISN'T A SUPERIOR OFFICER'S JAW THIS TIME.
AT EASE, LIEUTENANT. THIS AIN'T A DAMN INSPECTION.
YOU BUSTED UP CAPTAIN CAMPOMANES PRETTY GOOD, HANK. HE'LL BE EATING SOUP FOR A LONG TIME.
SOUP NEVER HURT ANY-ONE...

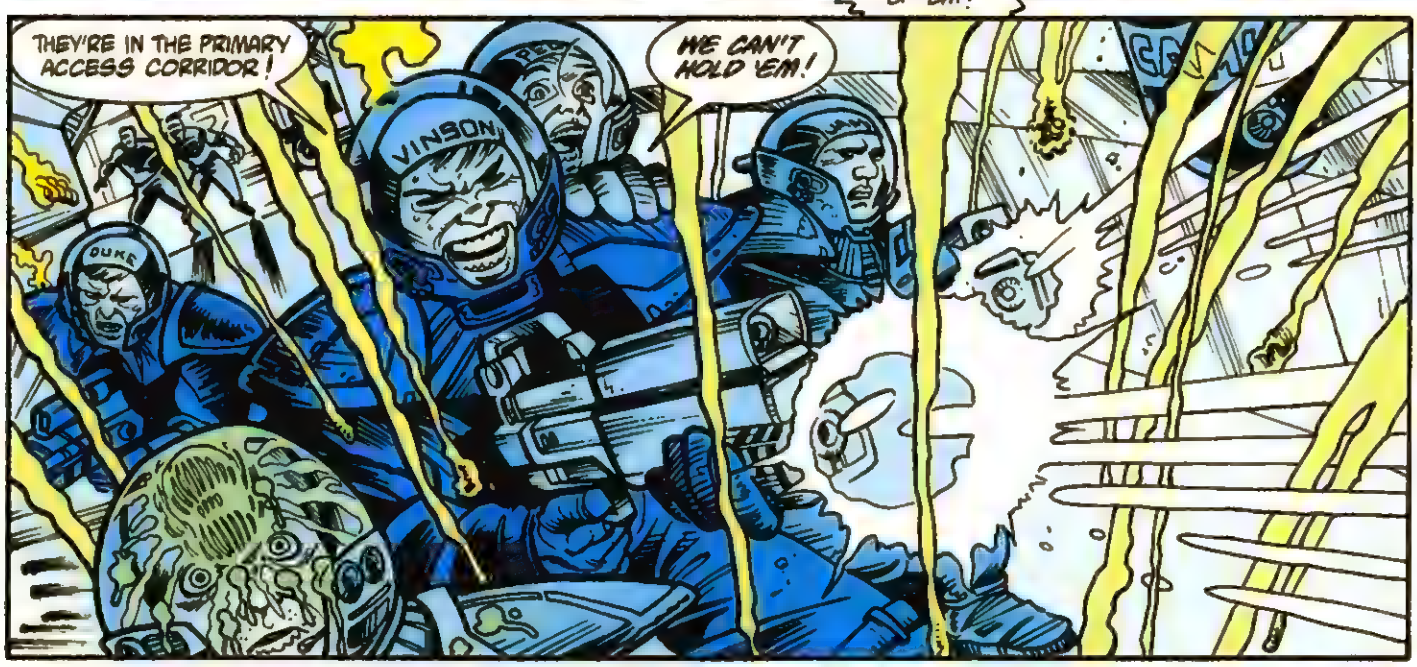
YOU THINK THIS IS FUNNY?
I THINK CAMPOMANES WAS BEATING THE CRAP OUT OF A FOURTEEN-YEAR-OLD HOOKER. I THINK I DIDN'T LIKE IT.
YOU'RE JUST DAMN LUCKY THERE WERE WITNESSES.
CAMPOMANES IS LUCKY THERE WERE WITNESSES.
TION 2
SECURITY
PETROVIC

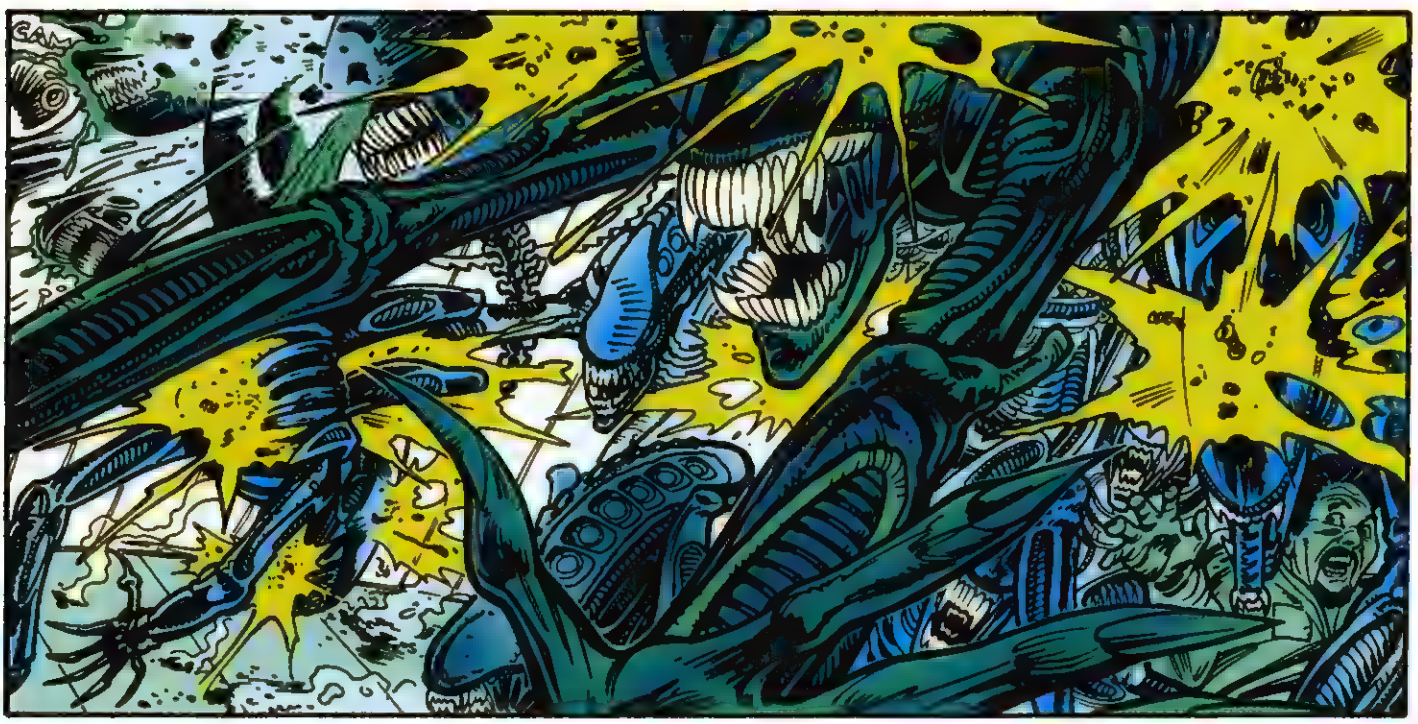

ENOUGH TOUGH TALK, HANK. THIS IS SERIOUS. AND IT ISN'T YOUR FIRST INFRACTION.
JUST COUNT YOURSELF FORTUNATE THAT YOUR OLD MAN HAS THE EAR OF THE BRASS.
WHAT THE HELL DOES MY FATHER HAVE TO DO WITH THIS?


DON'T PLAY DUMB, HANK. HE'S CHAIRMAN OF THE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE, FOR GOD'S SAKE... HE IS CLOUT.
HELL, HE'S THE NUMBER ONE REASON THESE FRONTIER MOBILE BASES WERE FUNDED IN THE FIRST PLACE. HE BEAT THE BUSHES FOR INTERNATIONAL AND COLONIAL SUPPORT, HE BROUGHT THE CORPORATE PARTNERS ON BOARD.
THE CAREERS OF HALF THE FRONTIER BRASS ARE DEPENDENT ON HIS LARGESS, AND THE OTHER HALF ARE LINED UP, EAGER TO PLEASE.
HE'S KEPT YOUR LITTLE PINK BEHIND OUT OF THE STOCKADE MORE THAN ONCE.
I LIKE YOU, HANK. AND YOU'RE JUST ABOUT THE BEST FIELD SOLDIER I'VE EVER SEEN. BUT I'M SICK OF YOUR CRAP. YOU AIN'T WORTH IT.
YOU'RE GETTING OUT, BUT YOU AIN'T GETTING OFF. YOU'RE GETTING THE LATRINE DUTY OF THE DAY, THE MOTHER OF ALL PUKE DETAILS.
YOU'RE GOING TO HAUL A REPLACEMENT LABOR CREW TO AN UNDER-CONSTRUCTION DEEP COMMUNICATIONS ARRAY. YOU WILL BE IN THE MIDDLE OF NOWHERE FOR AN ENTIRE YEAR, AND YOU WILL BE THE COMMANDING OFFICER FOR THIS CHOICE CREW.
THEY'RE ALL PROBLEM CHILDREN, GOLDBRICKS, SCREW-UPS—YOU'LL LIKE 'EM.
DO NOT PAINT!
MAAS NEOTECH
USCM

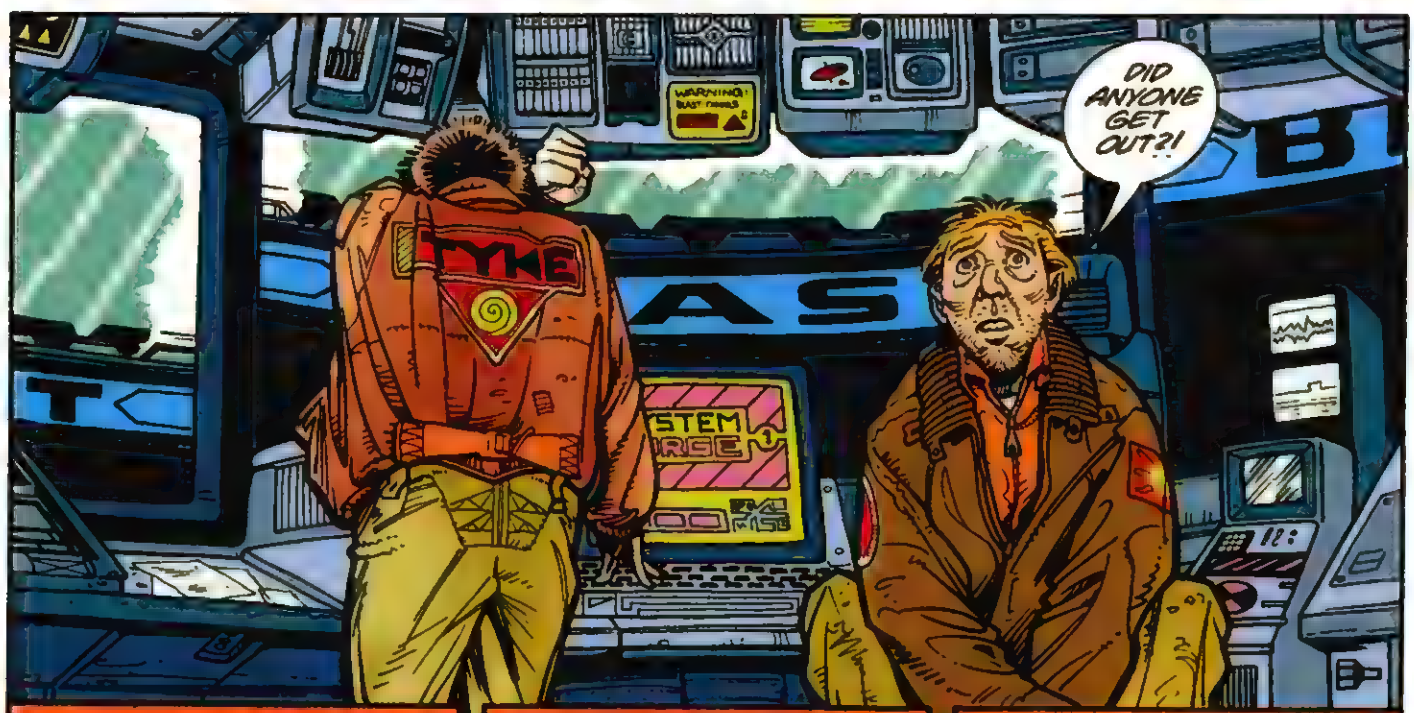
EN ROUTE, YOU'LL BE DOCKING AT AN ALPHATECH SUNGUN FACILITY TO DELIVER A LOAD OF TOXINS.
AND IN OUR CONTINUING EFFORTS TO COOPERATE WITH OUR CORPORATE PARTNERS, YOU WILL BE TRANSPORTING AN ALPHATECH EXECUTIVE AND HIS SECURITY TEAM TO THIS FACILITY.
BABYSITTER, GARBAGE MAN, DELIVERY BOY...
THANKS, DAD.
PREVENT FOD SAFETY
AMS 1-23
BAY 21
LISTEN TO ME, YOU SPOILED SON-OF-A-BITCH!
AIN'T YOUR DADDY GOT YOU THIS DETAIL—IT WAS ME. AND I HAD TO PUT MY ASS IN HARM'S WAY TO GET IT!
DADDY HAD A DISCHARGE ALL ARRANGED. YOU WERE GOING BACK TO EARTH, BOY!
BUT I GOT THE FEELING YOU WEREN'T READY TO GO HOME...
Y19
AY 18
THINK SAFETY
NAVY
GET SOME CHOW AND SOME SHEET AND BE READY TO TAKE OUT THE MELVILLE AT 1800 HOURS.
I'VE DONE ALL I CAN, AND ALL I'LL EVER DO AGAIN.
AND GROW THE HELL UP!

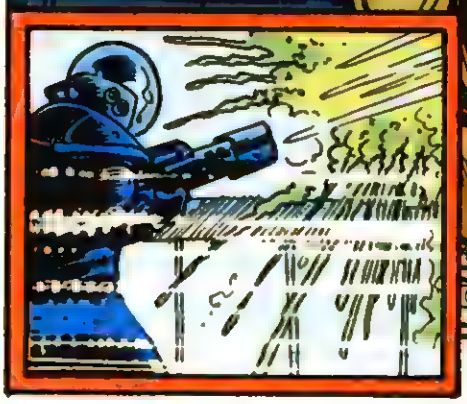
WHAT'S GOING ON DOWN THERE?!
THEY GOT OSBORNE AND CROSNI AND MURPHY AND--
WHO GOT--?
THEY'RE EVERY-WHERE!
WHAT'S EVERY-WHERE?
GET THE SECURITY TEAM DOWN HERE! OH, SWEET JESUS...!!!
SECURITY --VINSON! WHAT'S YOUR STATUS?
SY-FAILR
COOLANT SURGE
CHRIST ALMIGHTY! THERE'S HUNDREDS OF 'EM!

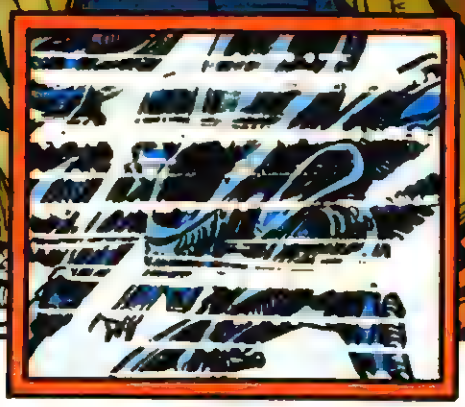

THEY'RE IN THE PRIMARY ACCESS CORRIDOR!
WE CAN'T HOLD 'EM!
VINSON
DUKE

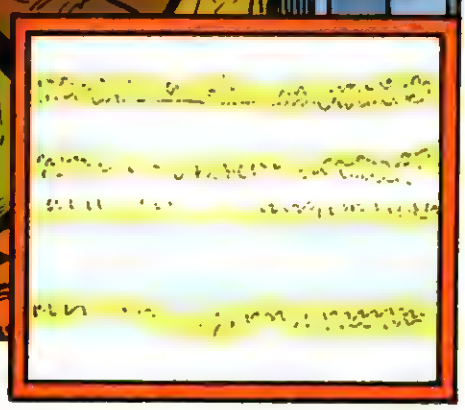


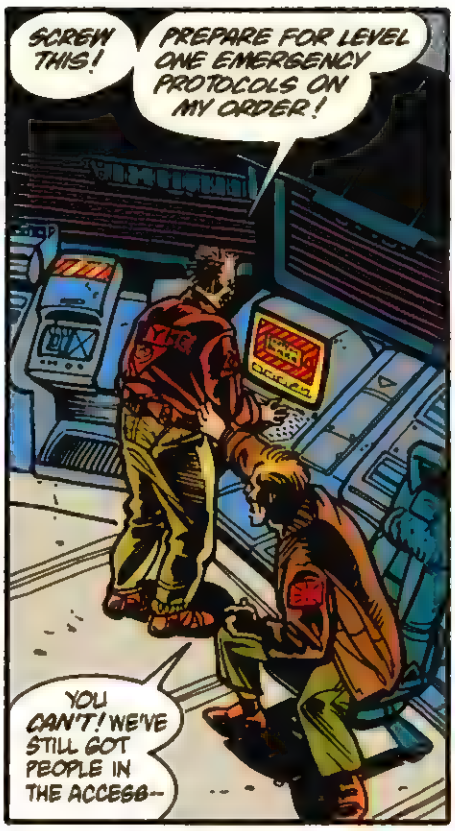
JAMES
NO...
GET READY TO SHUTTER THE COMPLEX AS SOON AS WE REACH THE INNER EMERGENCY LOCKS!
VINSON
NO NO NO NO!!!
GET THOSE SHUTTERS UP! SEAL OFF EVERYTHING EXCEPT THE INNER LOCK!
DID THEY GET OUT? DID ANYONE GET OUT?


DID ANYONE GET OUT?!
TYKE
WARNING!
STEM





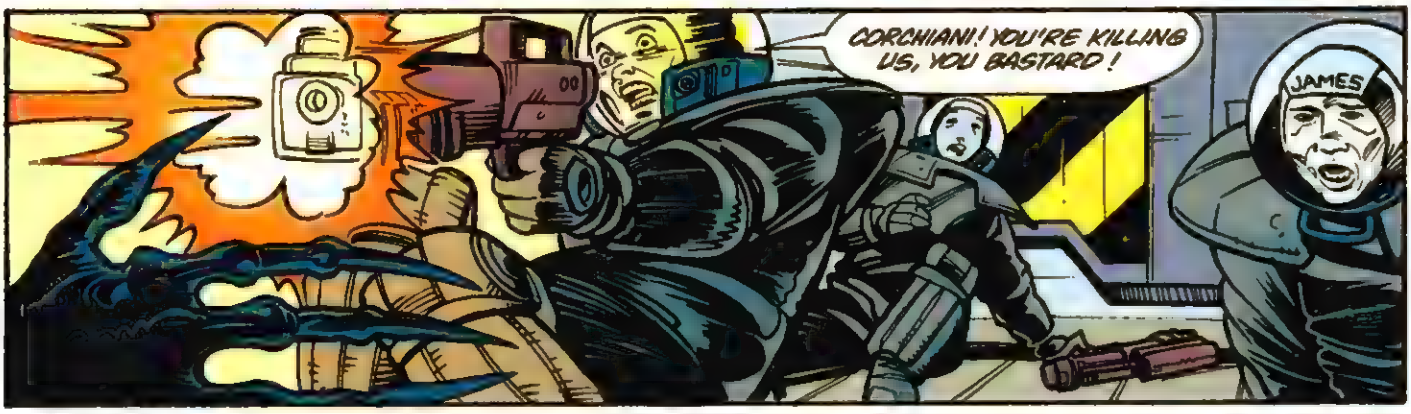


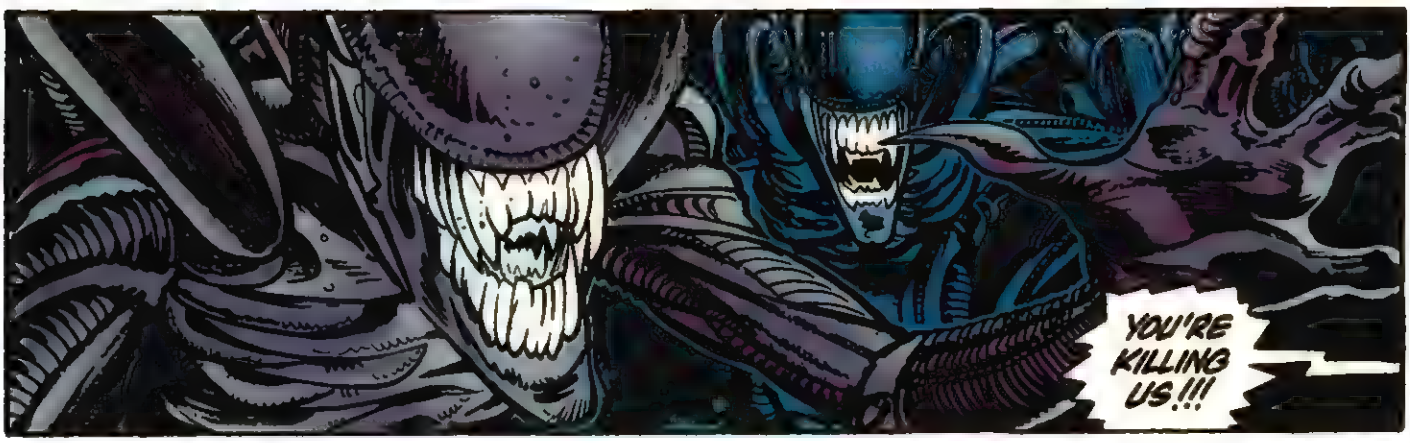

SCREW THIS!
PREPARE FOR LEVEL ONE EMERGENCY PROTOCOLS ON MY ORDER!
YOU CAN'T! WE'VE STILL GOT PEOPLE IN THE ACCESS--

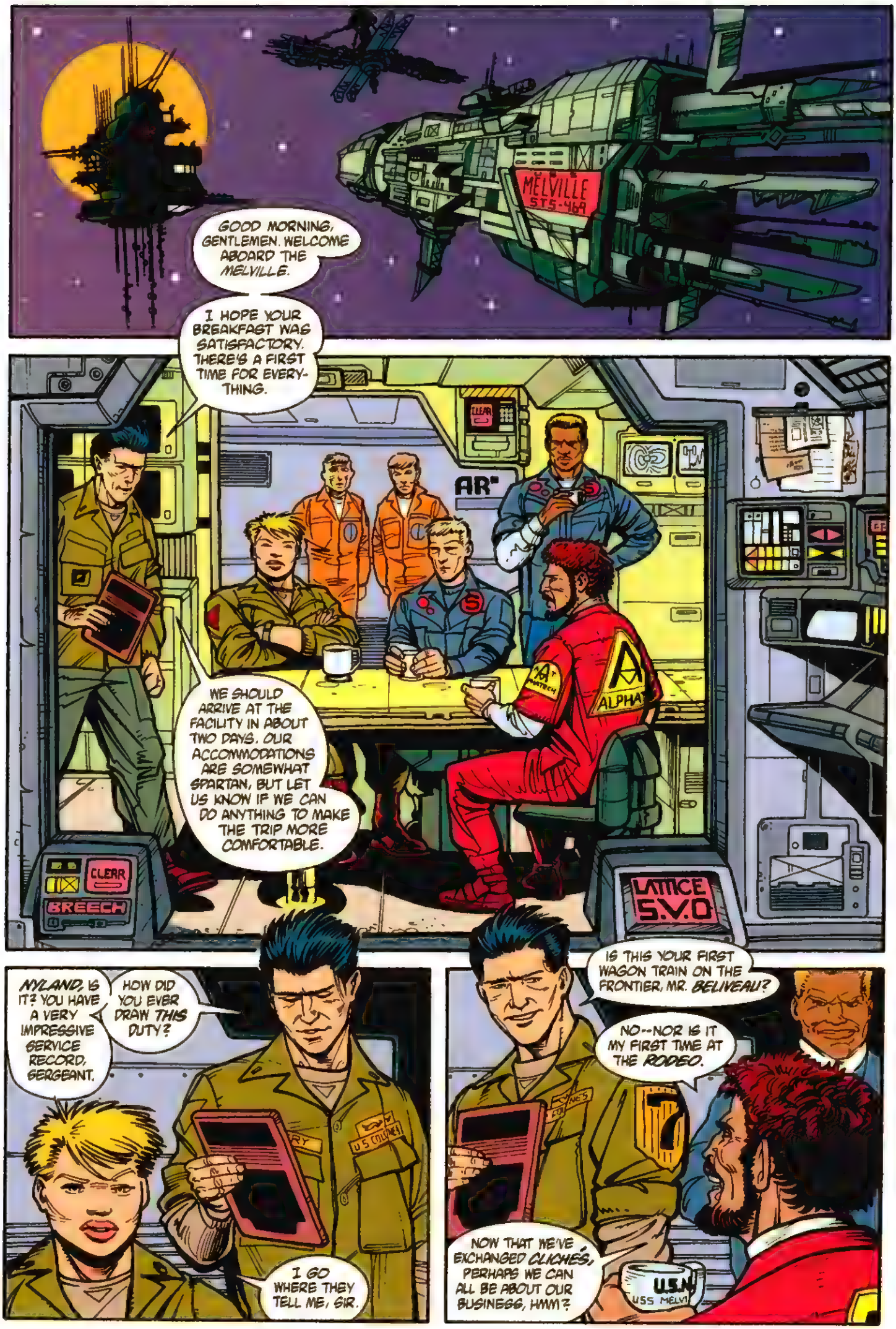
THOSE ARE THE THINGS THEY FOUND ON ACHERON! THEY'LL KILL US ALL IF THEY GET IN HERE!
NOW, GET OUT OF MY FACE OR I'LL KILL YOU MYSELF!

SEALING INNER LOCKS NOW!

MOW MOW MOW MOW MOW MOW
THEY'RE CLOSING DOWN!

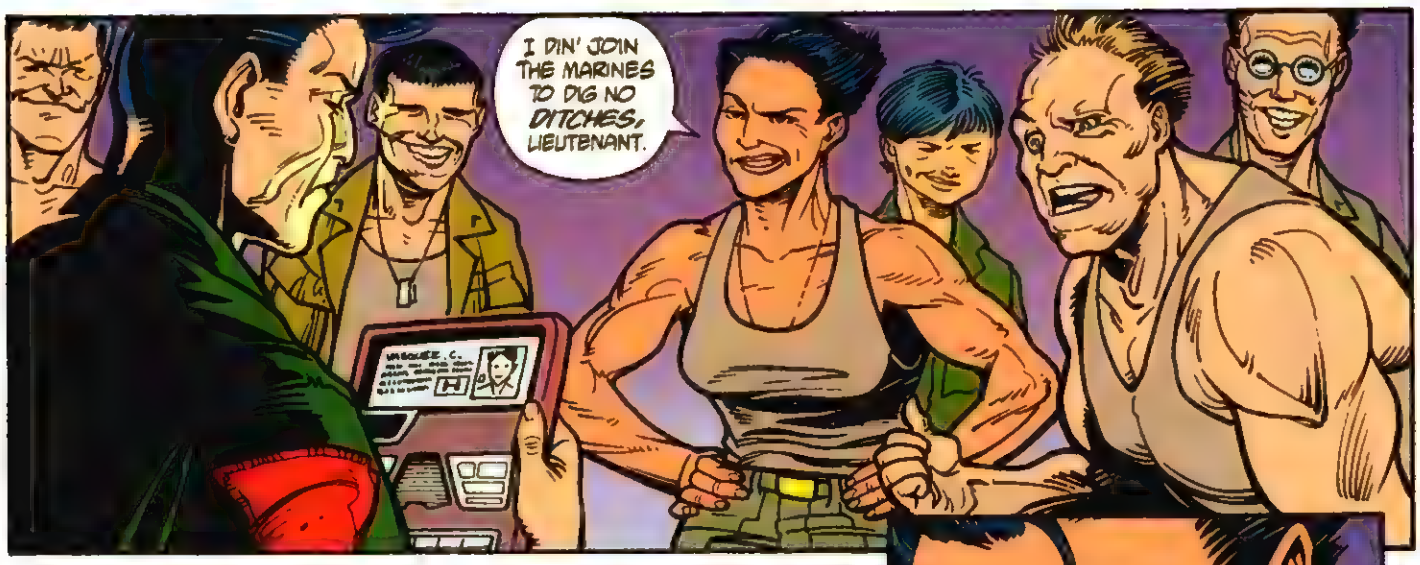

CORCHIANI! YOU'RE KILLING US, YOU BASTARD!
JAMES


YOU'RE KILLING US!!!


MELVILLE
STS-469
GOOD MORNING, GENTLEMEN. WELCOME ABOARD THE MELVILLE.
I HOPE YOUR BREAKFAST WAS SATISFACTORY. THERE'S A FIRST TIME FOR EVERY-THING.
WE SHOULD ARRIVE AT THE FACILITY IN ABOUT TWO DAYS. OUR ACCOMMODATIONS ARE SOMEWHAT SPARTAN, BUT LET US KNOW IF WE CAN DO ANYTHING TO MAKE THE TRIP MORE COMFORTABLE.
CLEAR
BREECH
LATTICE S.V.O
ALPHA
NYLAND, IS IT? YOU HAVE A VERY IMPRESSIVE SERVICE RECORD, SERGEANT.
HOW DID YOU EVER DRAW THIS DUTY?
I GO WHERE THEY TELL ME, SIR.
IS THIS YOUR FIRST WAGON TRAIN ON THE FRONTIER, MR. BELIVEAU?
NO--NOR IS IT MY FIRST TIME AT THE RODEO.
NOW THAT WE'VE EXCHANGED CLICHÉS, PERHAPS WE CAN ALL BE ABOUT OUR BUSINEGG, HMM?
U.S.N.
USS MELVI

EXCUSE ME, LIEUTENANT, BUT YOU HAVE A SCHEDULED BRIEFING WITH THE SQUAD BEFORE THEY GO INTO HYPERSLEEP.
AND I BELIEVE THESE GENTLEMEN HAVE IMPORTANT WASTE DISPOSAL CONCERNS TO ADDRESS.
NICE SHOT THERE, SERGEANT. NOT EXACTLY OUT OF THE BOOK--
PERMISSION TO SPEAK FREELY, SIR?
I'M AWARE OF THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF YOUR ASSIGNMENT. I HAVE SERIOUS MISGIVINGS REGARDING YOUR QUALIFICATIONS FOR COMMAND.
THIS SQUAD IS A BAD BUNCH. ANY UNPROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOR ON YOUR PART COULD HAVE GRAVE CONSEQUENCES. I WON'T ALLOW THAT. I JUST THOUGHT YOU SHOULD KNOW.
THANK YOU, SERGEANT. I'LL BEAR THAT IN MIND.
THAT WOULD BE ADVISED, SIR.
Uh-oh--MOM AND DAD ARE HOME.
SERGEANT DYKE AND LIEUTENANT DICK.
ALL RIGHT--GET OFF YOUR CANS AND TRY TO LOOK LIKE MARINES!

PRETTY IMPRESSIVE LOOKING OUTFIT. AND SUCH OUTSTANDING SERVICE RECORDS!
I'M HONORED TO BE IN YOUR PRESENCE.
WARN


I DIN' JOIN THE MARINES TO DIG NO DITCHES, LIEUTENANT.

PRIVATE CARMEN VASQUEZ. YOUR SISTER WAS DECORATED FOR BRAVERY, POST-HUMOUSLY. TOP GUN BUG KILLER.
S'RIGHT.
BUT NO COMBAT RECORD AT ALL FOR LITTLE SISTER. JUST A LONG LIST OF INSUBORDINATION AND SCREW UPS.
SO HERE YOU ARE, SHOVELING CRAP. NO MEDALS FOR THAT.

YOU ALL KNOW THE SCORE. THIS ISN'T A DETAIL, IT'S A SENTENCE. IT WAS THIS OR THE STOCKADE FOR MOST OF YOU.
WE'LL BE SEEING A LOT OF EACH OTHER FOR THE NEXT YEAR. JUST DO YOUR JOB AND DO YOUR TIME.
I DON'T WANT ANY SURPRISES.
LIEUTENANT?
JESUS!
WHO THE HELL ARE YOU?
I'M SORRY, LIEUTENANT-- THIS IS LISTON, OUR SYNTHETIC.
HENRY
LISTON
US COLONIAL MARINES
HOW DO YOU DO.
ISN'T HE A LITTLE... LARGE FOR AN ANDROID?
HE'S A SECURITY MODEL.
I FEEL MORE SECURE ALREADY...
THAT'S ALL, PEOPLE. GET YOUR GEAR SQUARED AWAY, AND THEN PREP FOR HYPERSLEEP.
MR. LISTON WILL TUCK YOU IN.

BLAST
YOU SON OF A BITCH...
YOU ROTTEN CHICKENFEED SON OF A BITCH...
TO OPS 4-L
YOU COULD HAVE WAITED ANOTHER TEN DAMN SECONDS!
ROTTEN CHICKENFEED STILL BREATHING SON OF A BITCH! TEN MORE SECONDS AND THEY'D HAVE BEEN ALL OVER US.
IT'S MY CALL--I'LL LIVE WITH IT.
SOMEDAY, YOU'LL THANK ME FOR--
DEAR GOD.
VINSON!
TAKE A GOOD LONG LOOK, CORCHIANI! MAYBE HIS FAMILY WILL THANK YOU FOR--
h-he...help... me help... me...
HE'S ALIVE. ALIVE, GOD DAMN YOU!
GET EVERYBODY INTO THE OPERATIONS CENTER, NOW.
B LIFT
EMARDT, MEET ME ON LEVEL ONE IN FIVE MINUTES.
I'VE GOT AN IDEA...

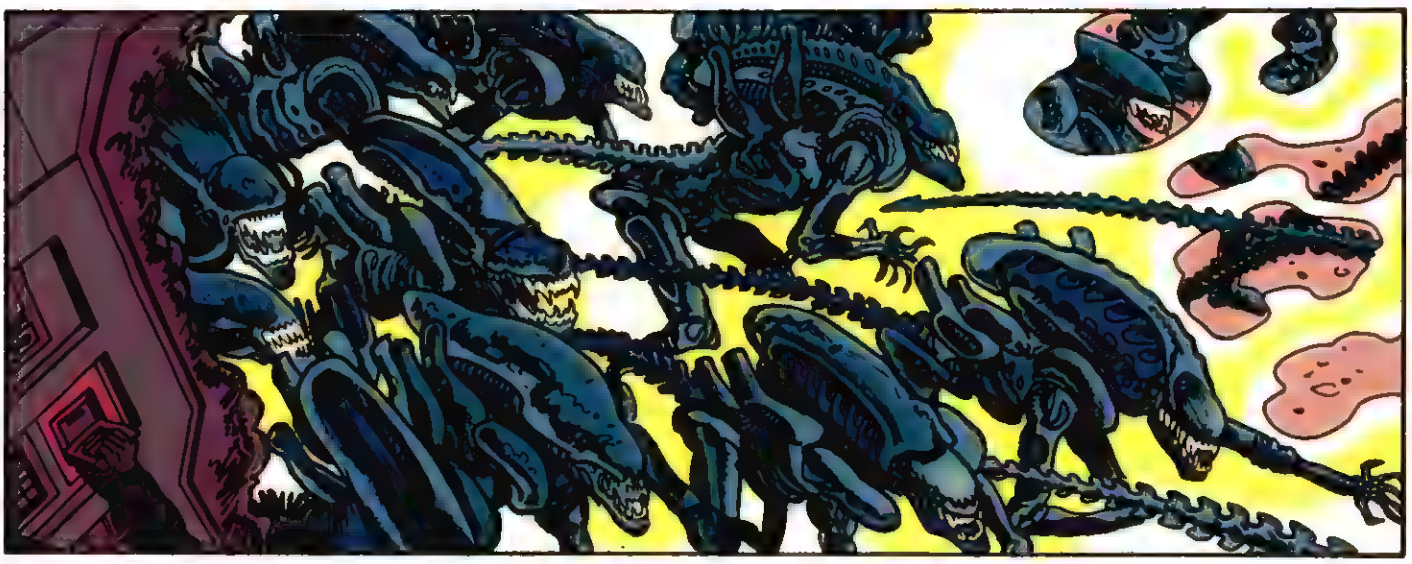
TO OPS 4L
OP!
CORCHIANI?
CORCHIANI, WHERE ARE--
LIFT
B
4 TOX BAY
SOUND HORN
OVER HERE --HURRY UP!
WE DON'T HAVE MUCH TIME.
TRAFFIC

WHAT...WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
I'M ARMING THE EXPLOSIVE BOLTS ON THE TOX-BAY TETHERING PYLONS.
ARE YOU NUTS? YOU CAN'T--
RGENCY
PLOSIVE
COUPLE

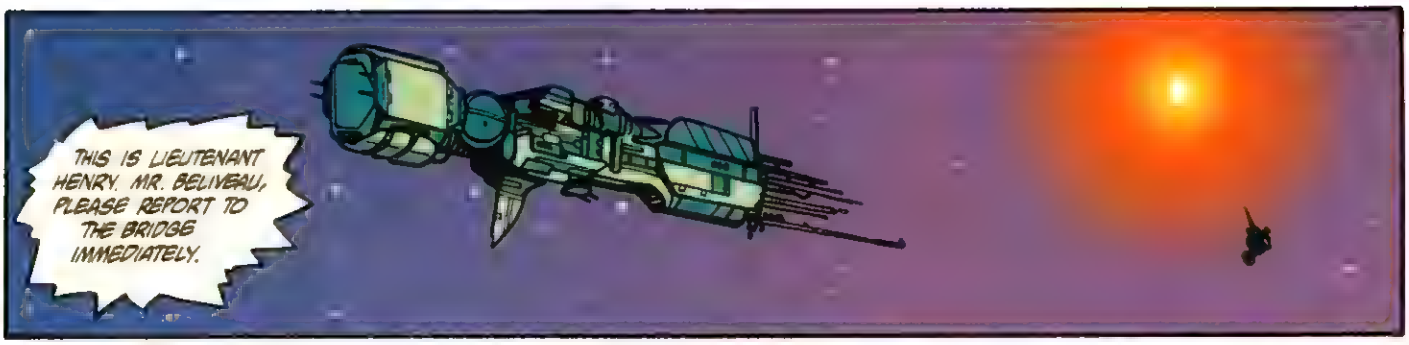
I CAN, AND I WILL. AND YOU'RE GONNA HELP ME!

NOW GET YOUR BUTT OVER TO THE OTHER PANEL. IT TAKES TWO TO ENGAGE LEVEL 1 EMERGENCY PROTOCOLS, AND YOU'RE MY DANCING PARTNER.
A TOX BAY
SOUND HORN
DON'T... DON'T DO THIS, MAN!

THERE MAY BE OTHERS ALIVE OVER THERE, HIDING.
WE'RE SAFE HERE. WE CAN WAIT FOR THE *MELVILLE*. THERE'LL BE A NEW SECURITY TEAM—AND A MARINE DETACHMENT ABOARD.
BAY
TYKE
WE CAN HOLD OUT FOR *MONTHS* HERE. THIS IS THE ONLY WAY INTO THE COMPLEX.
DAMN BUGS WOULD NEED A *PLASMA CANNON* TO BREECH--



BOLT
SEEK OUT THE REST OF THE CHILDREN.
MAKE THEM READY TO MEET THE FATHER.



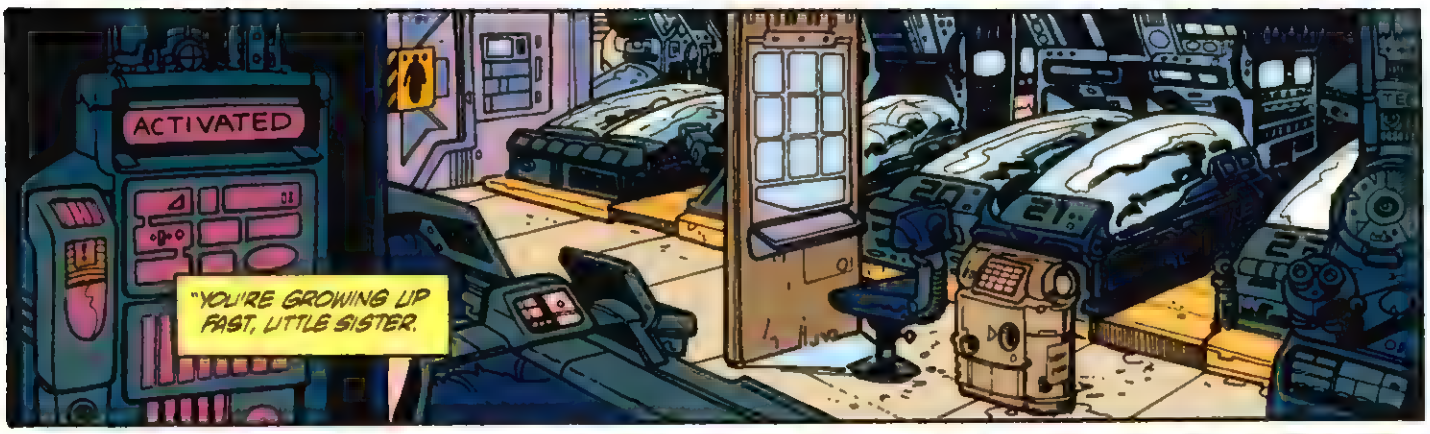
I HOPE THIS IS *IMPORTANT*, LIEUTENANT.

LET'S HOPE *NOT*.

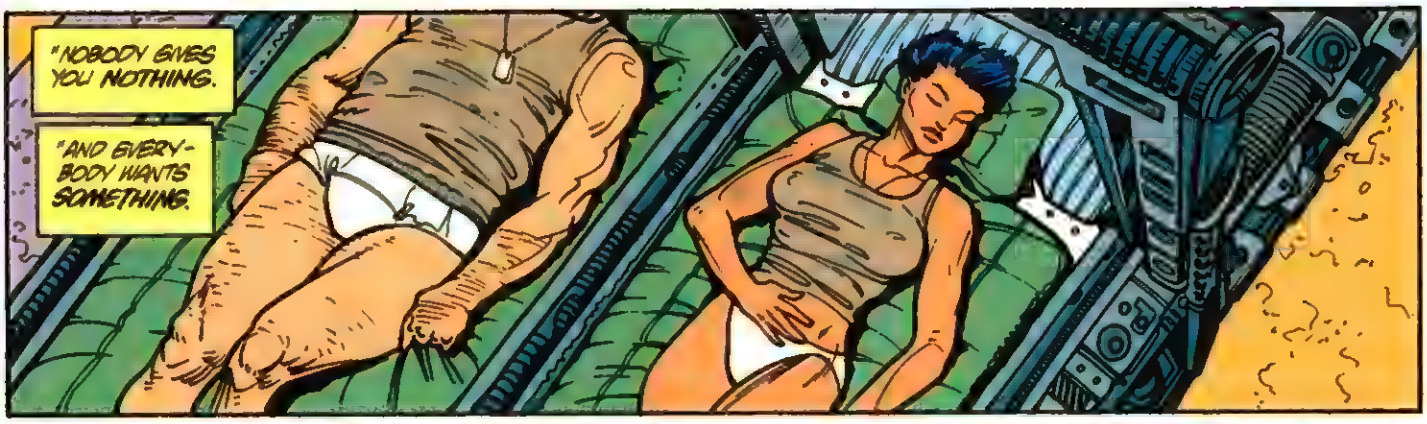
WE HAVEN'T BEEN ABLE TO RAISE THE FACILITY. THEIR BEACON SEEMS TO BE OPERATING PROPERLY, BUT THEY HAVEN'T RESPONDED TO OUR TRANSMISSIONS.

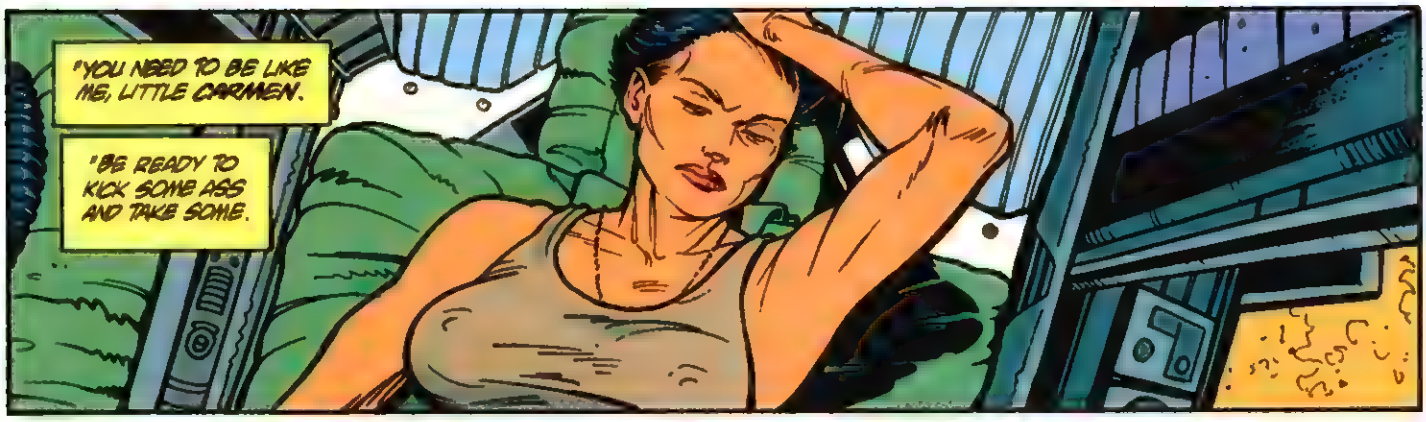
ARE YOU SURE THE PROBLEM DOESN'T ORIGINATE *HERE*?

SERGEANT, BRING THE MARINES OUT OF HYPERSLEEP. THEIR ASSISTANCE MIGHT BE REQUIRED.
THAT WON'T BE NECESSARY LIEUTENANT.
MY TEAM IS WELL-TRAINED AND PREPARED FOR ANY CONTINGENCY.
WE DON'T NEED YOUR MEN GETTING UNDER FOOT.
OF COURSE, LIEUTENANT.
SERGEANT, BRING THE MARINES OUT OF HYPERSLEEP. THEIR ASSISTANCE MIGHT BE REQUIRED.
COLONIAL MARINES
"ONE CAN NEVER BE TOO CAREFUL."
US NAVY
USS MELVILLE

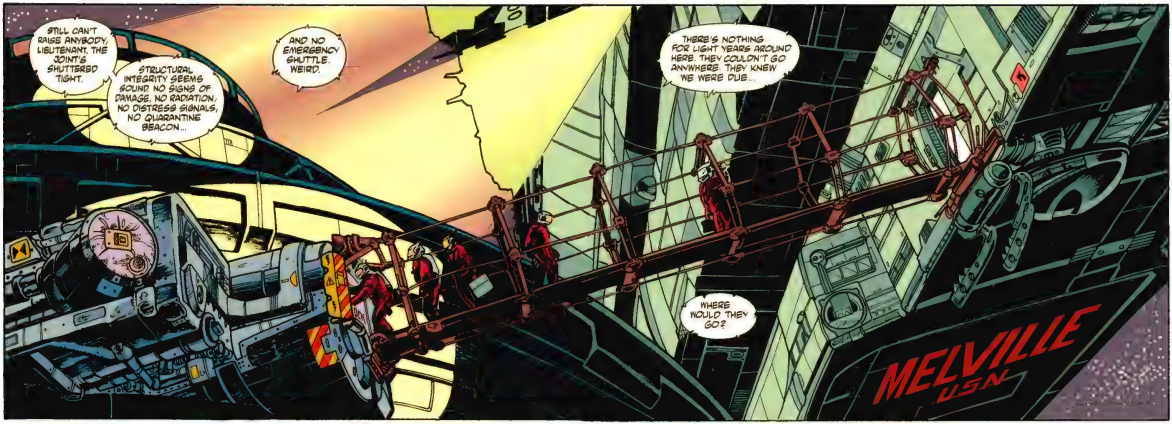

ACTIVATED
"YOU'RE GROWING UP FAST, LITTLE SISTER.

"REMEMBER, THIS AIN'T AN EASY LIFE. YOU GOTTA BE TOUGH.
"TOUGH LIKE ME.


"NOBODY GIVES YOU NOTHING.
"AND EVERY-BODY WANTS SOMETHING.


"YOU NEED TO BE LIKE ME, LITTLE CARMEN.
"BE READY TO KICK SOME ASS AND TAKE SOME.

"ANYTIME, ANYWHERE."
SIESTA'S OVER, VASQUEZ...
TIME TO PUT ON YOUR WAR FACE.


STILL CAN'T RAISE ANYBODY, LIEUTENANT. THE JOINT'S SHUTTERED TIGHT.
STRUCTURAL INTEGRITY SEEMS SOUND. NO SIGNS OF DAMAGE. NO RADIATION. NO DISTRESS SIGNALS, NO QUARANTINE BEACON...
AND NO EMERGENCY SHUTTLE. WEIRD.
THERE'S NOTHING FOR LIGHT YEARS AROUND HERE. THEY COULDN'T GO ANYWHERE. THEY KNEW WE WERE DUE...
WHERE WOULD THEY GO?
MELVILLE
U.S.N.

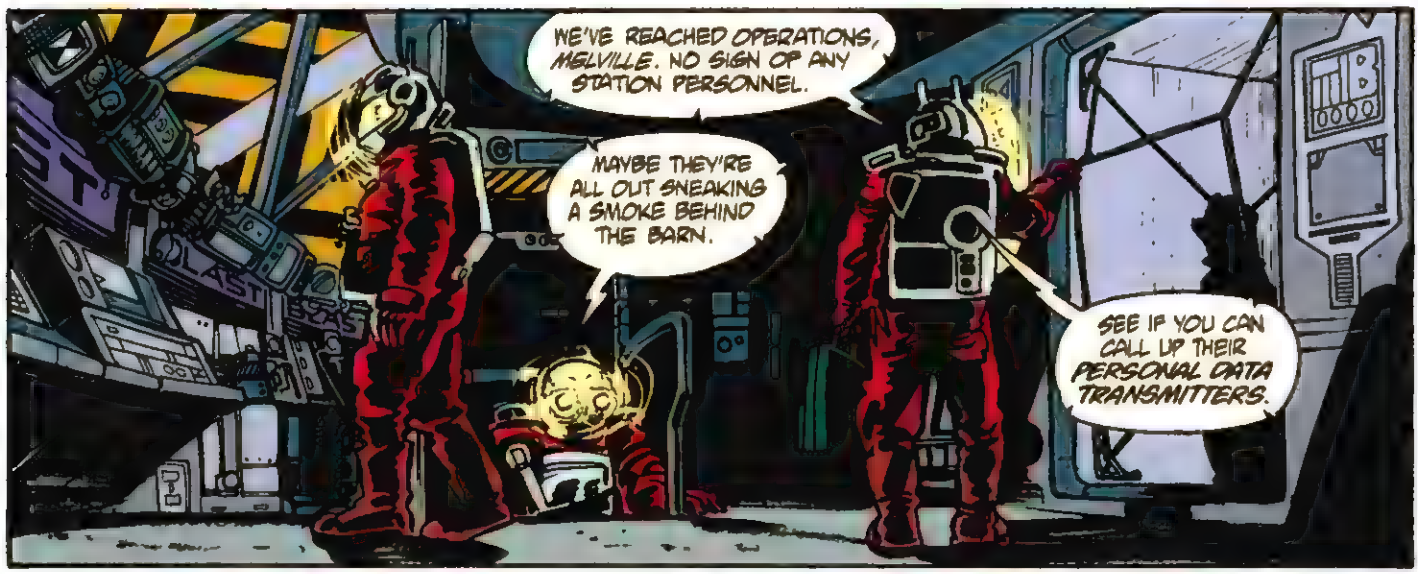
NORMITAG TO MELVILLE.
ENTERING AIRLOCK. WE SHOULD HAVE A STATUS REPORT FOR YOU MOMENTARILY.
LOCK
A

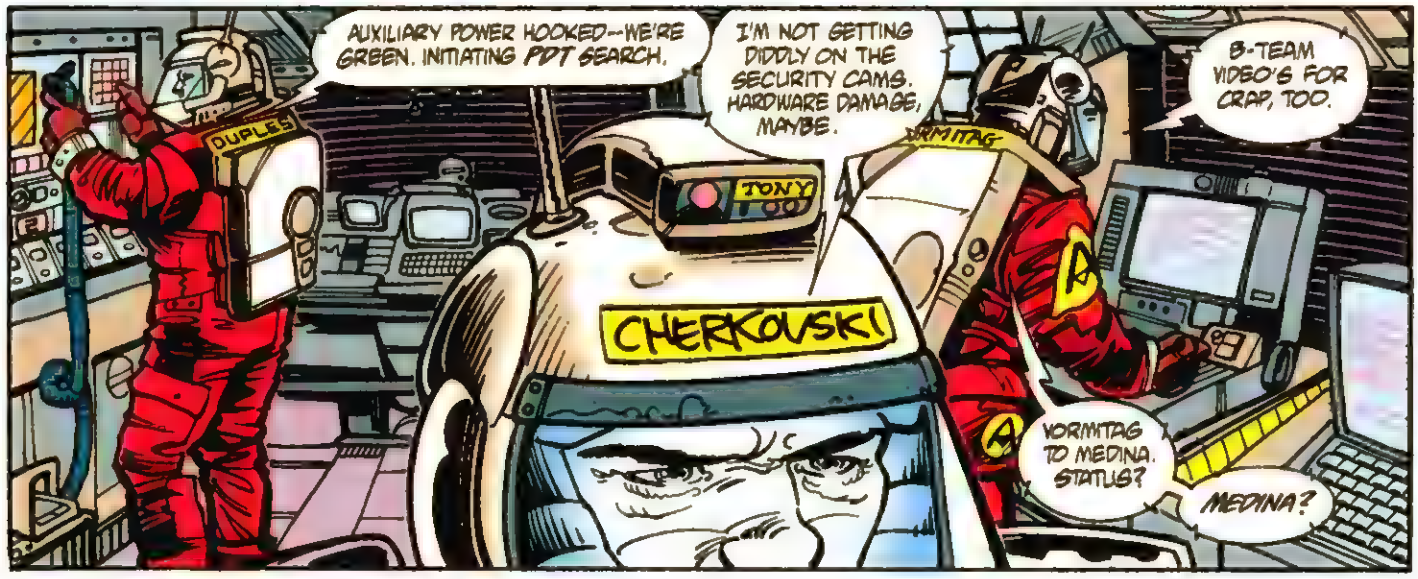
INTERIOR ATMOSPHERE LOOKS GOOD. NO TOXINS PRESENT. SLIGHTLY ELEVATED CO_2 LEVEL--NOTHING TO WRITE HOME ABOUT.
TRACES OF PARTICULATES --MIGHT HAVE BEEN A FIRE.
POWER LEVELS ARE WAY DOWN. HOPE YOU ALL PACKED A SWEATER.
WE'RE HEADING IN, MELVILLE.
B

ELEVATOR'S OUT.
DAMN GRAV BETTER HOLD.
ZERO-G GIVES ME GAS.
A

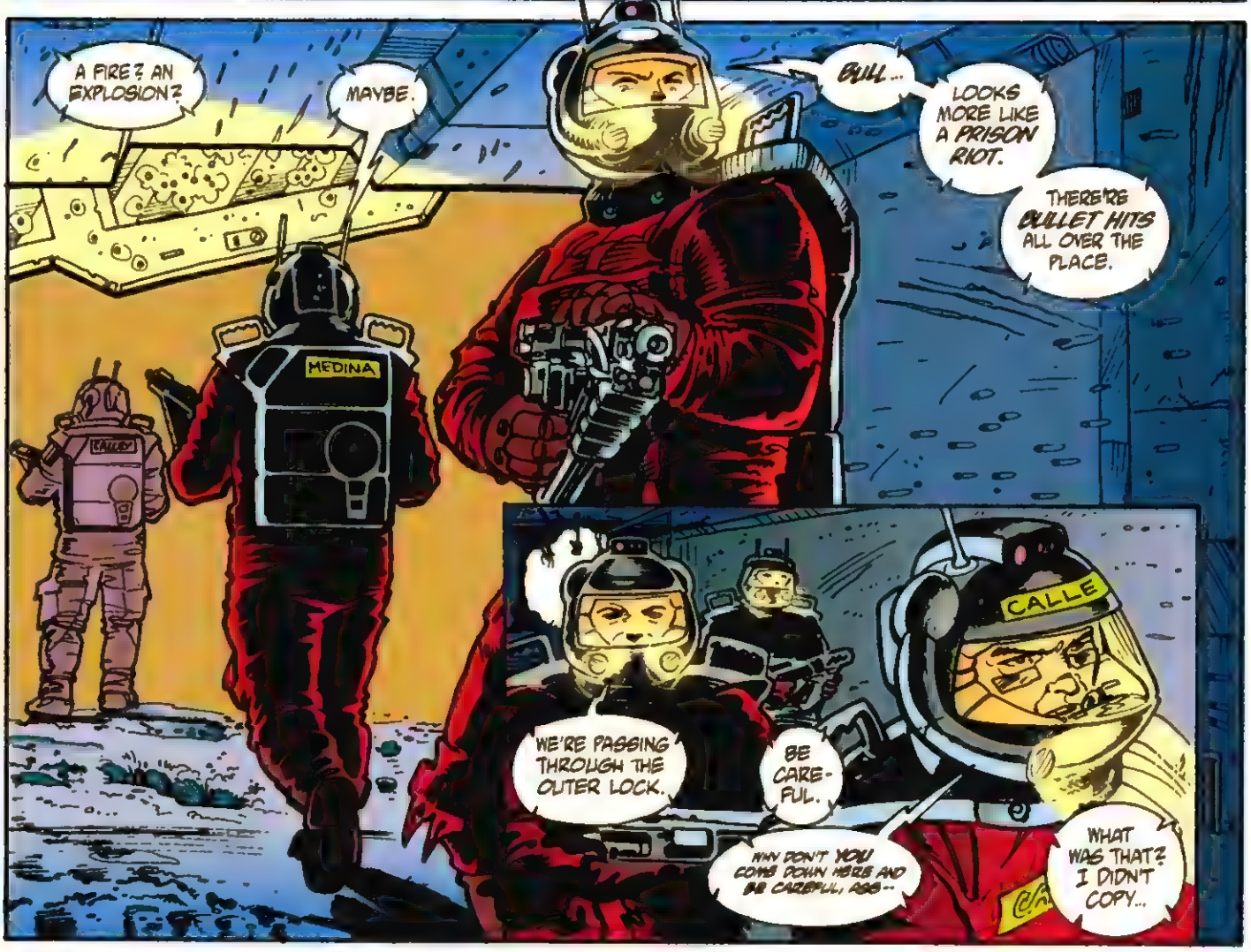
BELIVEAU HERE. I WANT INTEGRATED ASSESSMENTS FROM OPERATIONS AND DORSAL ASAP.
ROGER, MELVILLE. WE'RE SPLITTING UP. A-TEAM TO OPERATIONS, B-TEAM TO TOX-BAY.
B

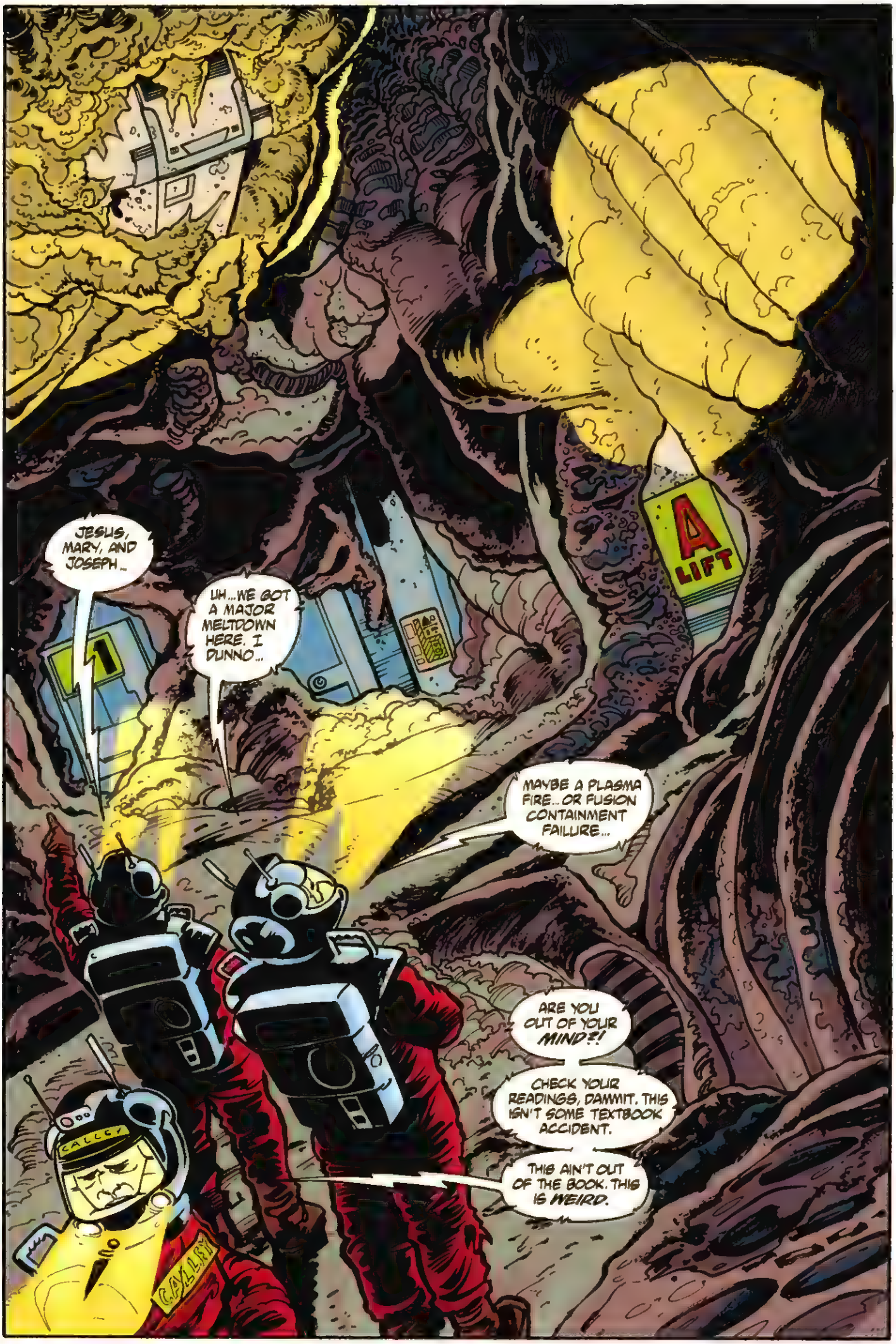
SPLITTING YOUR TEAM--I DON'T LIKE IT.
YOU DON'T HAVE TO LIKE IT.
THIS ISN'T MILITARY, LIEUTENANT. IT'S COMMERCE.
SOON WE'LL KNOW WHAT THE PROBLEM IS, AND THEN I CAN START FIRING PEOPLE.

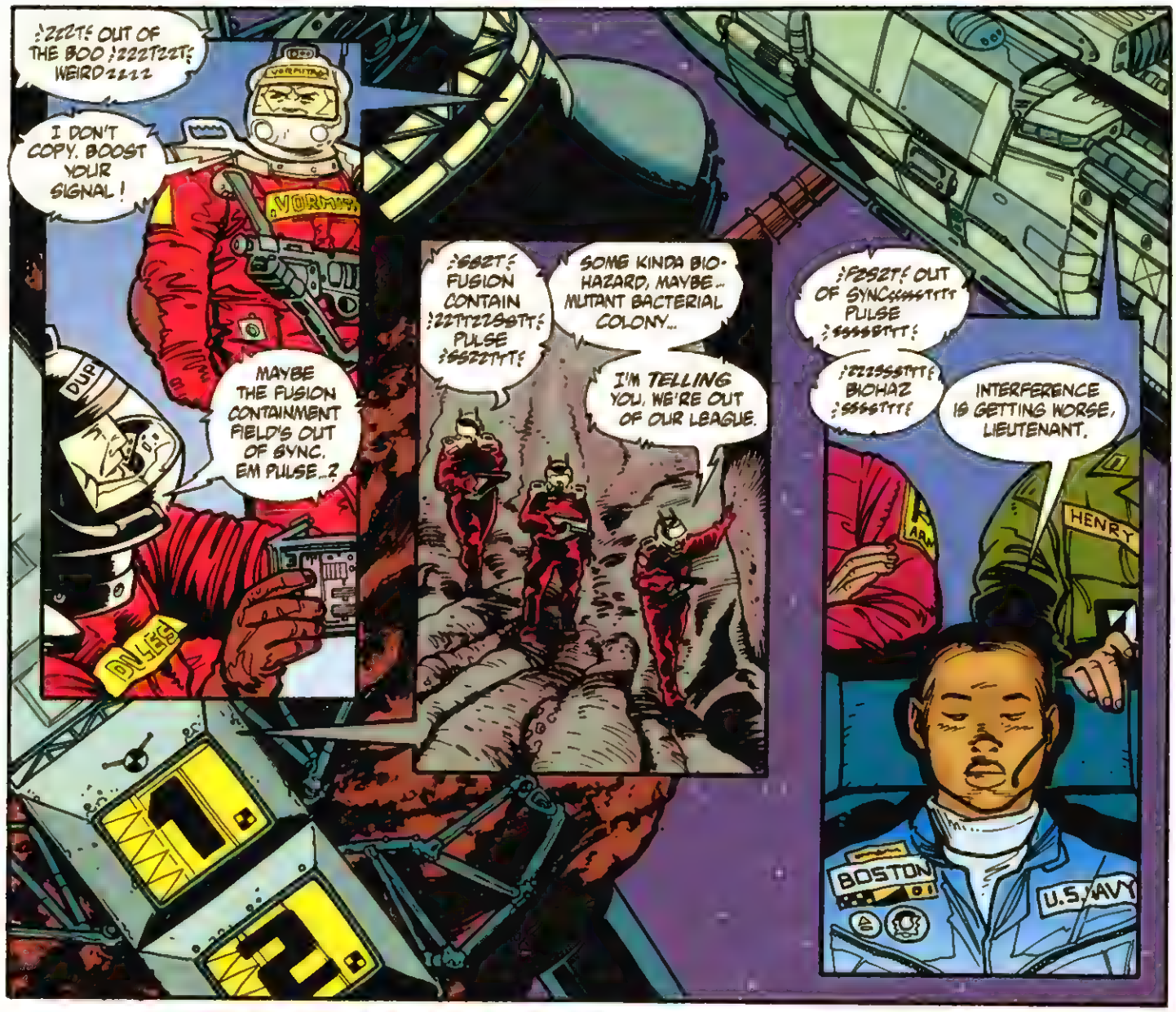

WE'VE REACHED OPERATIONS, MELVILLE. NO SIGN OF ANY STATION PERSONNEL.
MAYBE THEY'RE ALL OUT SNEAKING A SMOKE BEHIND THE BARN.
SEE IF YOU CAN CALL UP THEIR PERSONAL DATA TRANSMITTERS.


AUXILIARY POWER HOOKED--WE'RE GREEN. INITIATING PDT SEARCH.
I'M NOT GETTING DIDDLY ON THE SECURITY CAMS. HARDWARE DAMAGE, MAYBE.
B-TEAM VIDEO'S FOR CRAP, TOO.
DUPLESS
TONY
CHERKOVSKI
VORMITAG TO MEDINA. STATUS?
MEDINA?

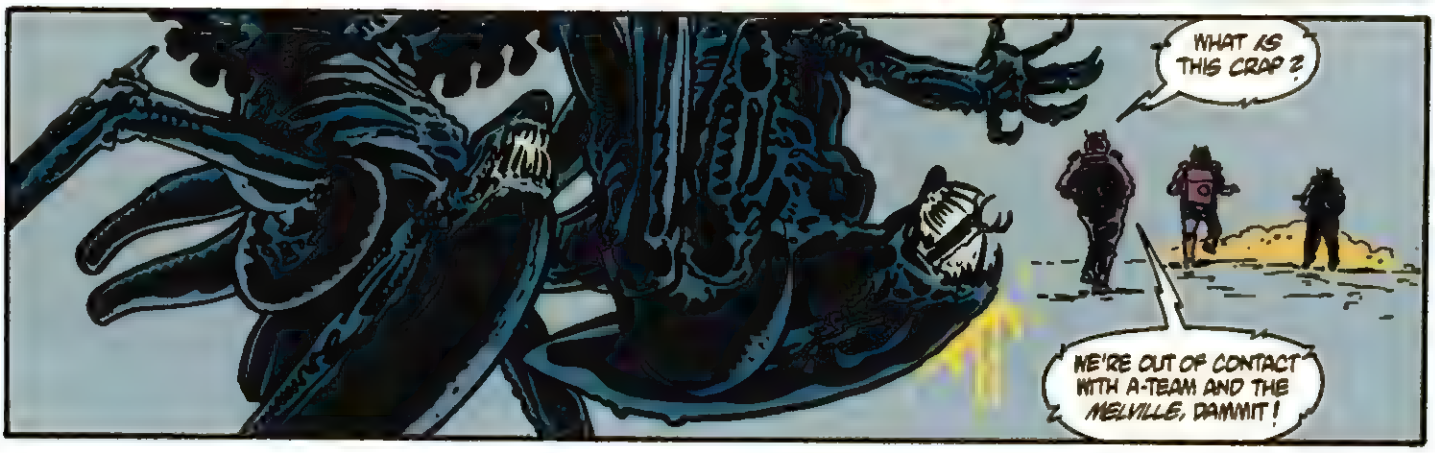
MEDINA! YOU COPY?
STATUS, GODDAMMIT.
MEDINA
UH...YEAH. SORRY.
WHAT? OH, YEAH...
BAY 4 OPS
WE'RE AT THE INNER LOCK OF THE PRIMARY ACCESS CORRIDOR. IT'S A REAL MESS DOWN HERE.
YOUR VIDEO'S BREAKING UP. DESCRIBE.
THERE'S A TWO-METER HOLE IN THE PRESSURE GATE, AND THE TUNNEL'S CHEWED UP BAD.
SOMETHING SERIOUS HAPPENED...


A FIRE? AN EXPLOSION?
MAYBE.
BULL...
LOOKS MORE LIKE A PRISON RIOT.
THERE'RE BULLET HITS ALL OVER THE PLACE.
MEDINA
CALLE
WE'RE PASSING THROUGH THE OUTER LOCK.
BE CARE-FUL.
WHY DON'T YOU COME DOWN HERE AND BE CAREFUL, ASS--
WHAT WAS THAT? I DIDN'T COPY...

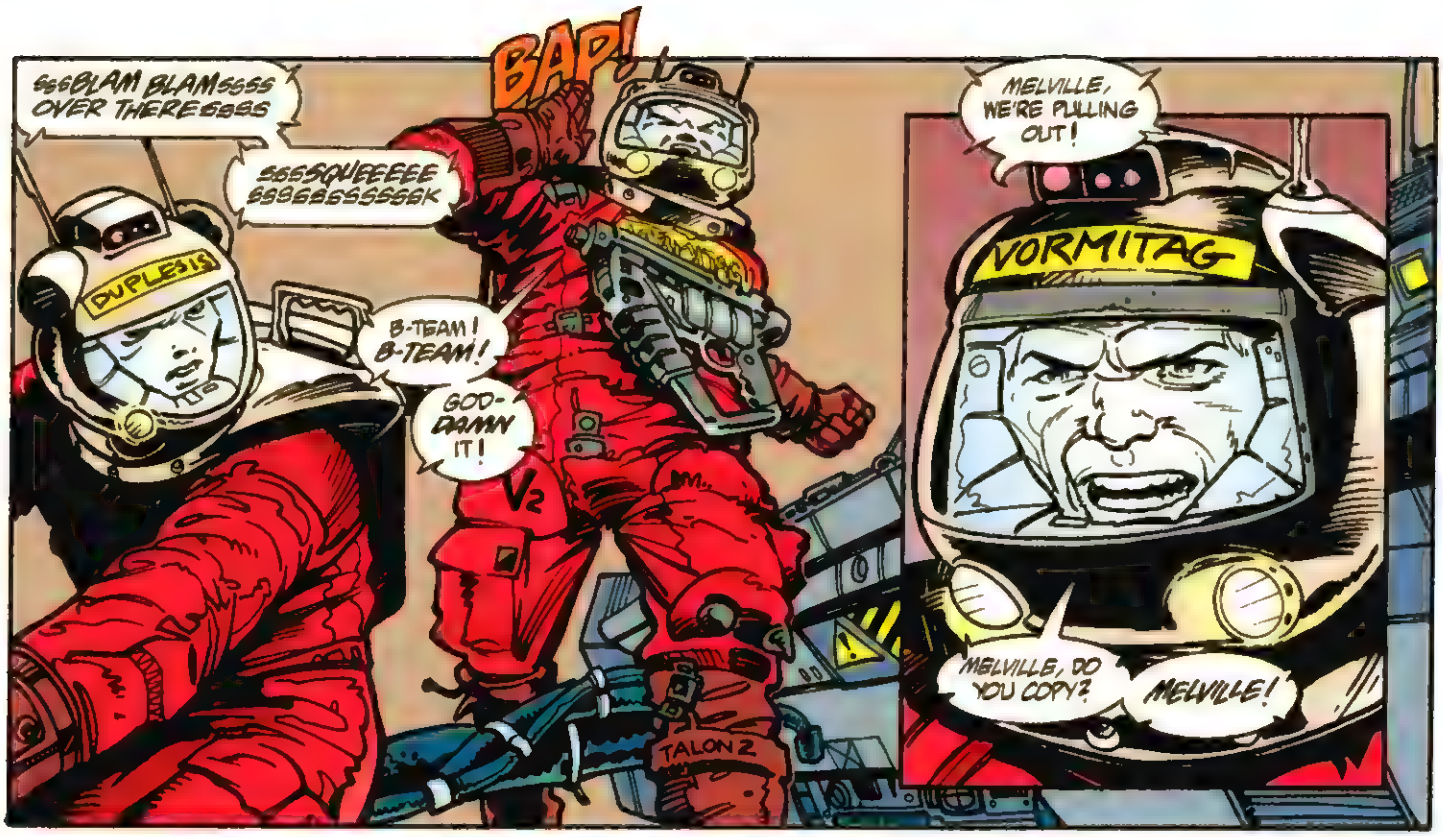

JESUS, MARY, AND JOSEPH...
UH...WE GOT A MAJOR MELTDOWN HERE. I DUNNO...
A LIFT
MAYBE A PLASMA FIRE...OR FUSION CONTAINMENT FAILURE...
ARE YOU OUT OF YOUR MIND?!
CHECK YOUR READINGS, DAMMIT. THIS ISN'T SOME TEXTBOOK ACCIDENT.
THIS AIN'T OUT OF THE BOOK. THIS IS WEIRD.
CALLEY
CALLEY


:ZZZT: OUT OF THE BOO :ZZZTZZT: WEIRD ZZZZ
I DON'T COPY. BOOST YOUR SIGNAL!
MAYBE THE FUSION CONTAINMENT FIELD'S OUT OF SYNC. EM PULSE...?
:SSZT: FUSION CONTAIN :ZZTTZZSSTT: PULSE :SSZZTTT:
SOME KINDA BIO-HAZARD, MAYBE... MUTANT BACTERIAL COLONY...
I'M TELLING YOU, WE'RE OUT OF OUR LEAGUE.
:FZSZT: OUT OF SYNC:SSSSTTTT PULSE :SSSSSTTT:
:ZZZSSSTTT: BIOHAZ :SSSSTTT:
INTERFERENCE IS GETTING WORSE, LIEUTENANT.
HENRY
BOSTON
U.S. NAVY

LET'S GET THE HELL OUT OF HERE AND LET THE GODDAMN JAR HEADS--
SHUT UP!

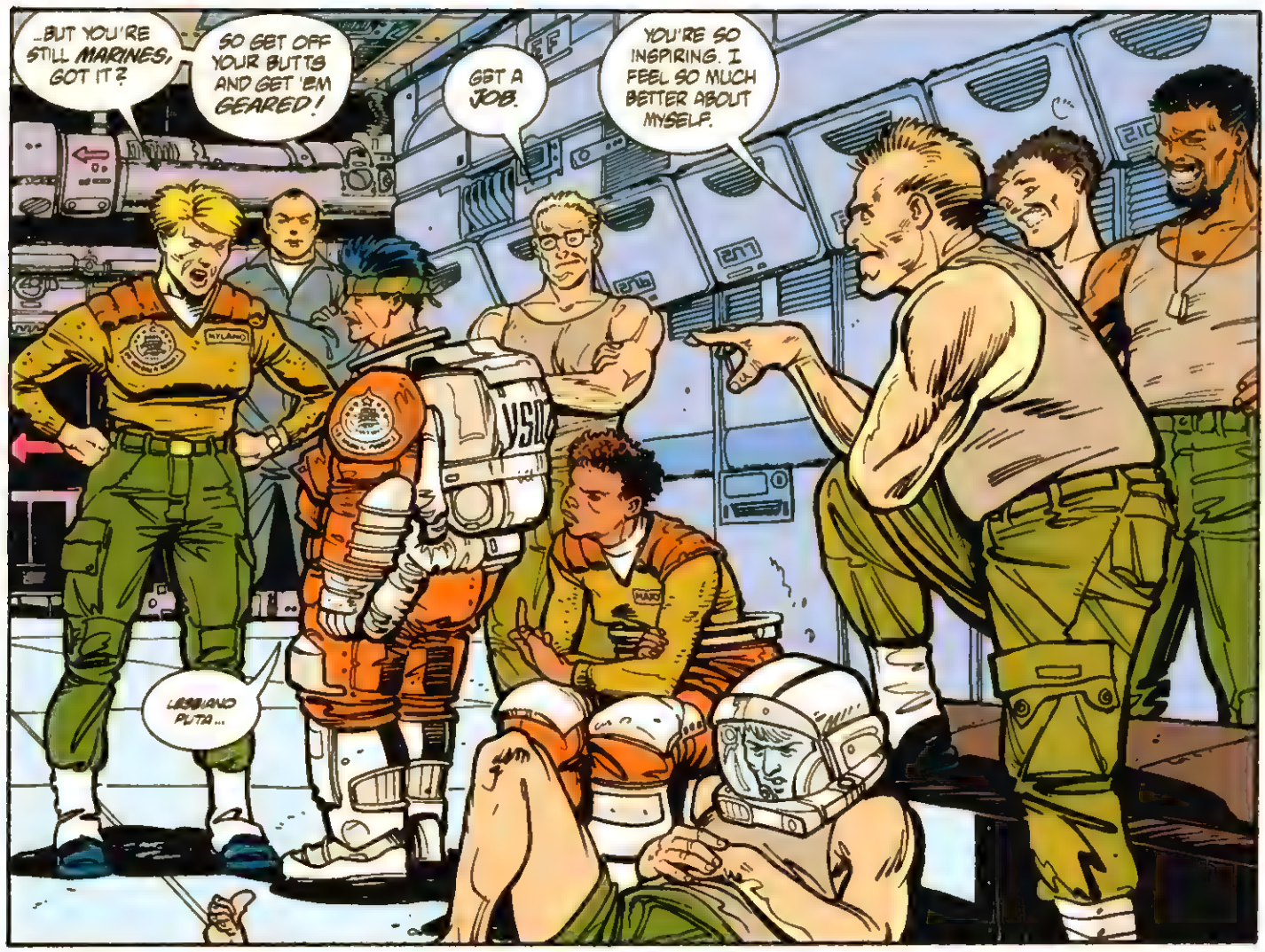

WHAT IS THIS CRAP?
WE'RE OUT OF CONTACT WITH A-TEAM AND THE MELVILLE, DAMMIT!

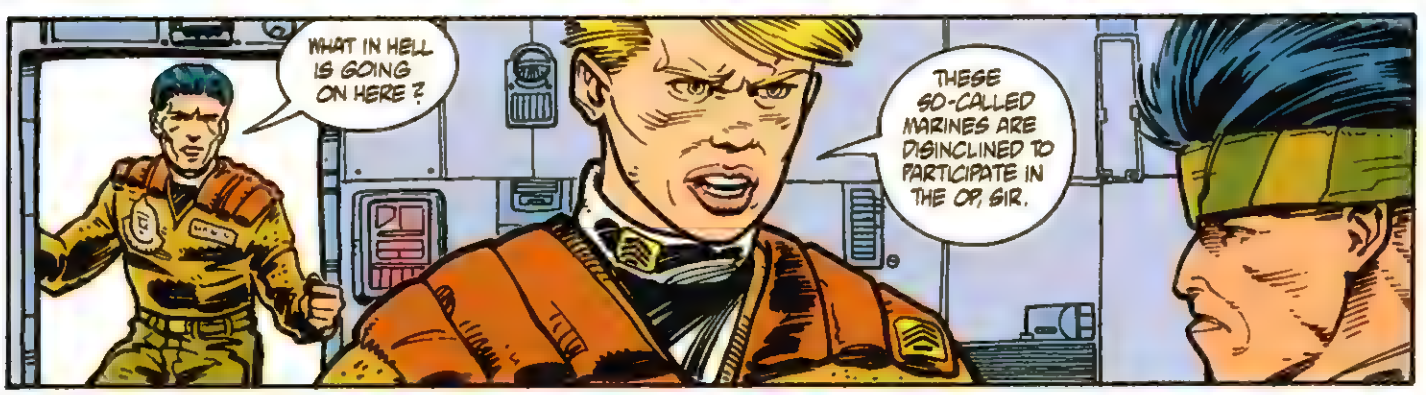
SSSSS
MAYBE SHE'S RIGHT...
THIS IS STARTIN' TO CREEP ME OUT. LET'S DUST OFF.
MEDIA
NAMATECH
B-TEAM-- DO YOU COPY?
DAMN!
SSSSSS GET OUT SSSSS
SSSS CREEP ME SSSS
PULL YOUR TEAM OUT WHILE YOU STILL CAN, BELIVEAU.
OKAY, WE'RE GETTIN' THE...
HELL...


BAP!
SSSBLAM BLAMSSSS OVER THERESSSS
SSSSQUEEEEE SSSSSSSSSSSK
DUPLESIS
B-TEAM! B-TEAM!
GOD-DAMN IT!
TALON 2
MELVILLE, WE'RE PULLING OUT!
NORMITAG
MELVILLE, DO YOU COPY?
MELVILLE!

SSSSSSSS
THAT'S IT-- I'M TAKING THE MARINES IN.
NOW, LOOK HERE... MY TEAM IS PREPARED FOR ANY CONTINGENCY. YOU ARE NOT AUTHORIZED--
LISTEN TO ME, YOU OILY WEASEL.
FROM THIS POINT ON, I DON'T WANT TO HEAR ONE WORD FROM YOU, GOT THAT?
IF YOU GOT A PROBLEM, WRITE ME A MEMO.

--AND YOU MAY BE THE LOWEST, GOOD-FOR-NOTHING, INBRED STINKING PILE OF MONKEY-CRAP-FOR-BRAINS PRISON SHOWER PEEPING VOMIT BAGS SINCE HUMANITY CRAWLED OUT OF THE PRIMORDIAL CESSPOOL...

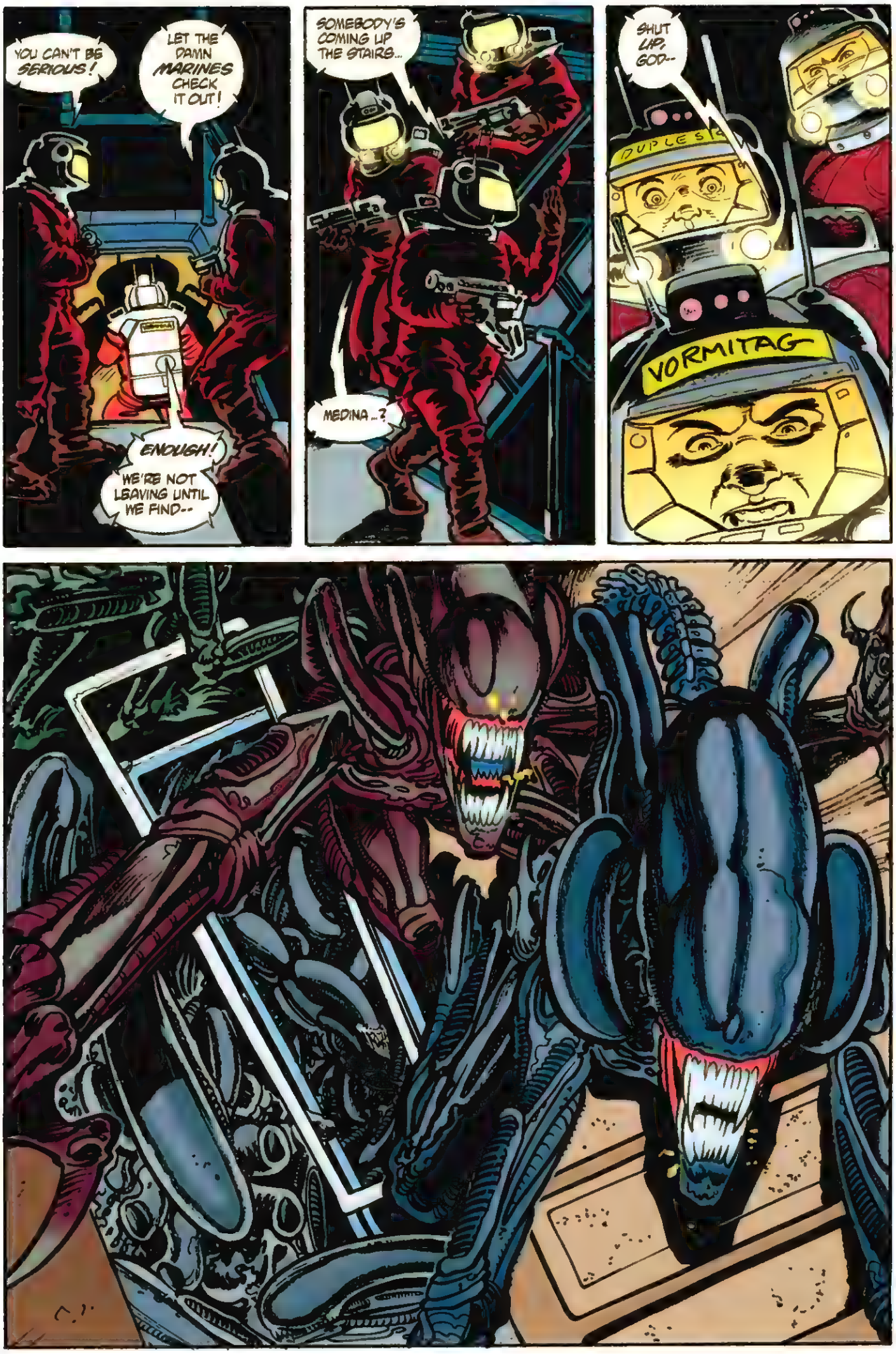

...BUT YOU'RE STILL MARINES, GOT IT?
SO GET OFF YOUR BUTTS AND GET 'EM GEARED!
GET A JOB.
YOU'RE SO INSPIRING. I FEEL SO MUCH BETTER ABOUT MYSELF.
LESBIANO PUTA...


WHAT IN HELL IS GOING ON HERE?
THESE SO-CALLED MARINES ARE DISINCLINED TO PARTICIPATE IN THE OP, SIR.

THAT THE DEAL, SOLDIER? YOU DISINCLINED?
BIG TIME.

KRAK

SORRY TO HEAR IT...


YOU CAN'T BE SERIOUS!
LET THE DAMN MARINES CHECK IT OUT!
ENOUGH!
WE'RE NOT LEAVING UNTIL WE FIND--
SOMEBODY'S COMING UP THE STAIRS...
MEDINA...?
SHUT UP, GOD--
VORMITAG

NOW, ARE YOU FEELING DISINCLINED TOO?
HELL NO, LIEUTENANT. I'M A MARINE.

FOR A SECURITY MODEL SYNTHETIC, YOU SEEM TO BE DOING A HELLUVALOT OF NOTHING, LISTON.
I AM OPERATING WITHIN THE PARAMETERS OF MY PROGRAMMING, LIEUTENANT.
THERE WAS NO THREAT OF VIOLENCE FROM THE TROOPS. I CANNOT ACT UNILATERALLY UNLESS CERTAIN SPECIFIC THRESHOLDS ARE REACHED.

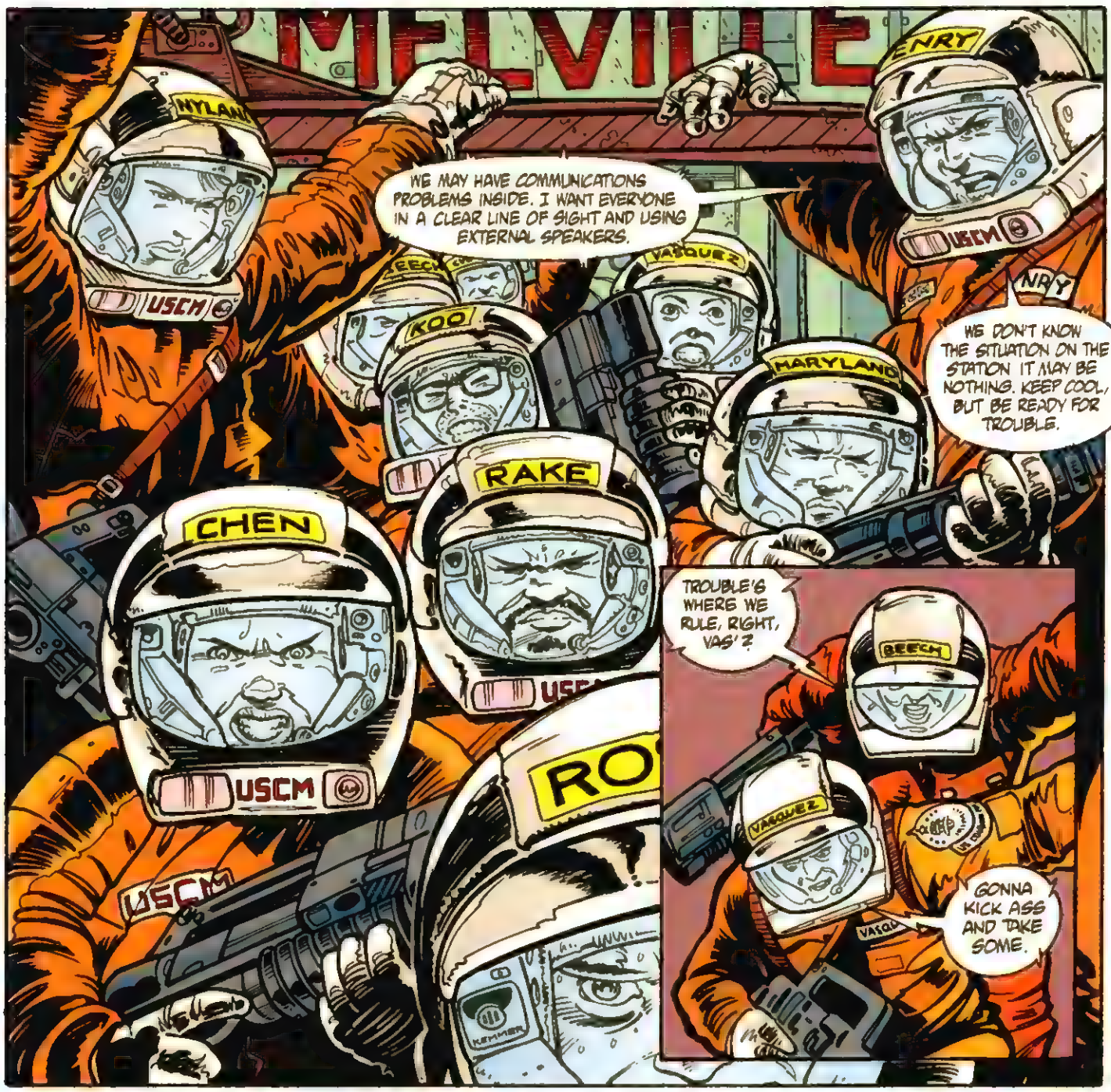
WHY AREN'T YOU GEARED FOR THE E.V.A.?
DUE TO MY SUBSTANTIAL DOLLAR VALUE, I AM NOT ALLOWED TO BE USED IN POTENTIALLY HOSTILE OPERATIONS UNLESS--

"--CERTAIN THRESHOLDS HAVE BEEN REACHED--" YEAH, YEAH...
MY, MY...
...AREN'T WE PRETTY.
RAKE
BEECH

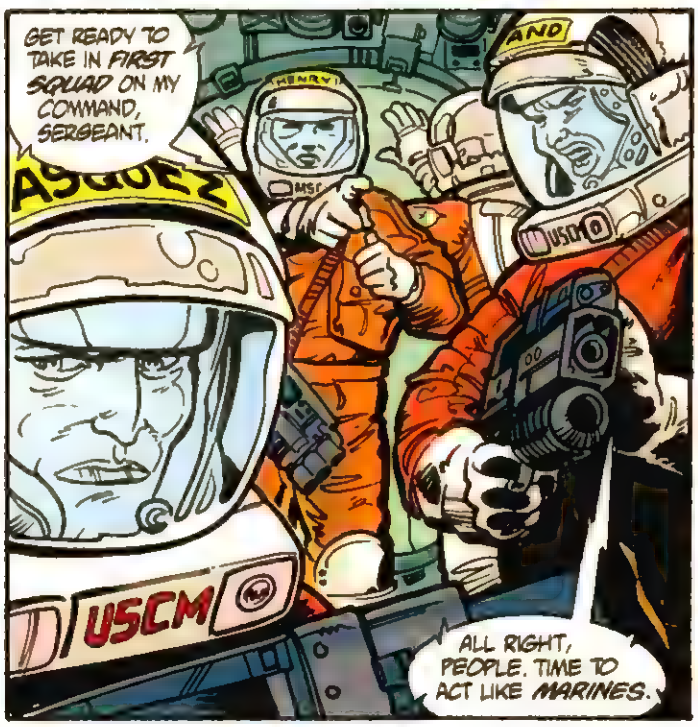
LAING
FREDCO
SCHILLING BIOLOGICAL
HRRN... KOFF!
UHNN...
UHK-UH-UHK
HSSSSS
TURN AWAY FROM HIM, CHILD.
HE IS FOR THE FATHER.

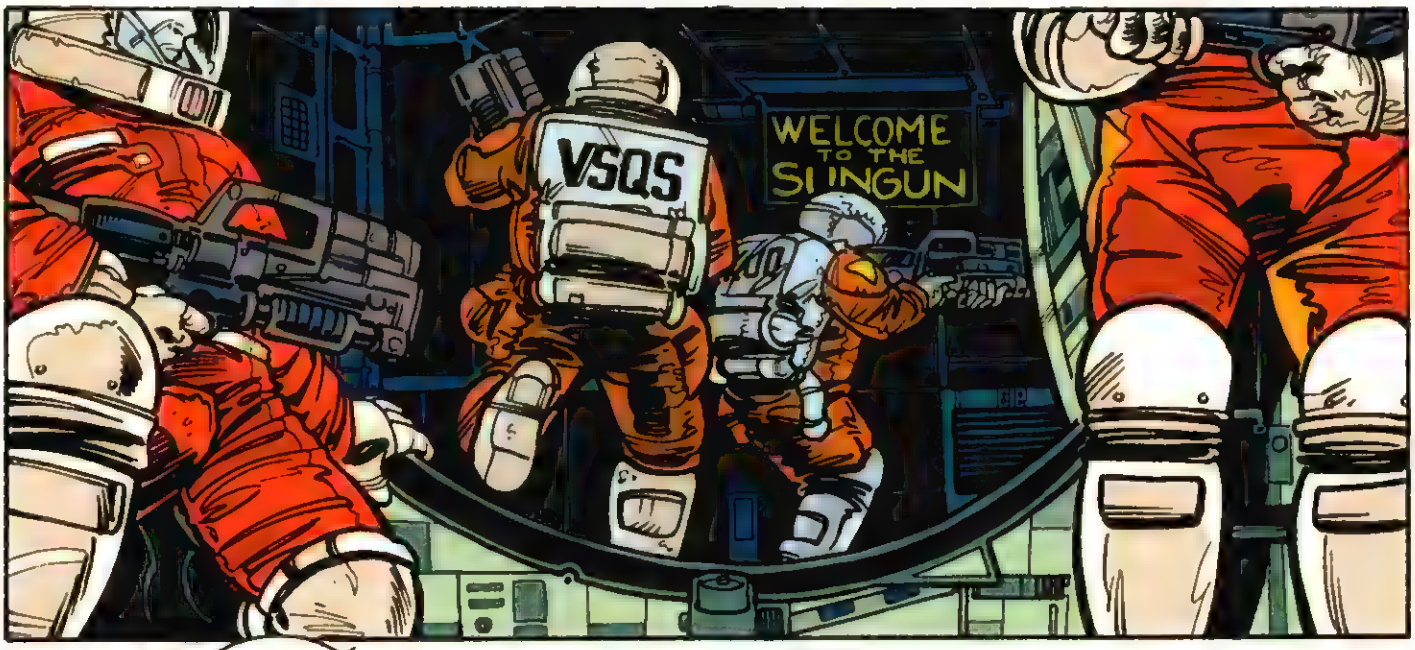
MH-WHERE AM--WHO ARE--
SAVE YOUR STRENGTH. YOU HAVE BEEN UNCONSCIOUS FOR SEVERAL DAYS.

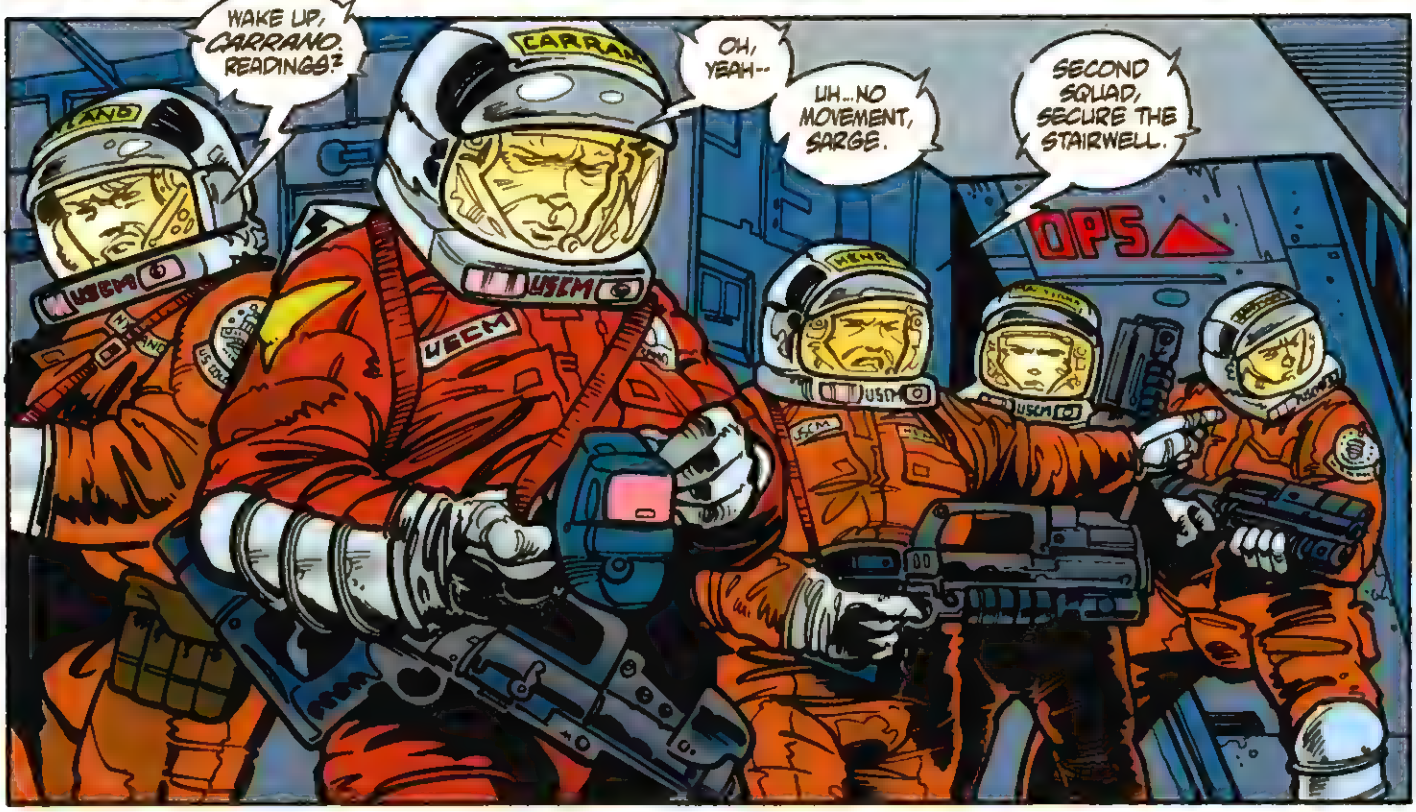
YOU ARE WEAK.
URGH--
THIS WILL GIVE YOU STRENGTH.
YESS..STRENGTH ..AND CLARITY.
CLARITY.. AND PURPOSE.
KHURK SPUTT HUKK


WE MAY HAVE COMMUNICATIONS PROBLEMS INSIDE. I WANT EVERYONE IN A CLEAR LINE OF SIGHT AND USING EXTERNAL SPEAKERS.
WE DON'T KNOW THE SITUATION ON THE STATION. IT MAY BE NOTHING. KEEP COOL, BUT BE READY FOR TROUBLE.
TROUBLE'S WHERE WE RULE, RIGHT, VAS'Z.
GONNA KICK ASS AND TAKE SOME.
NYLAN
HENRY
VASQUEZ
KOO
MARYLAND
RAKE
CHEN
USCM
BEECH

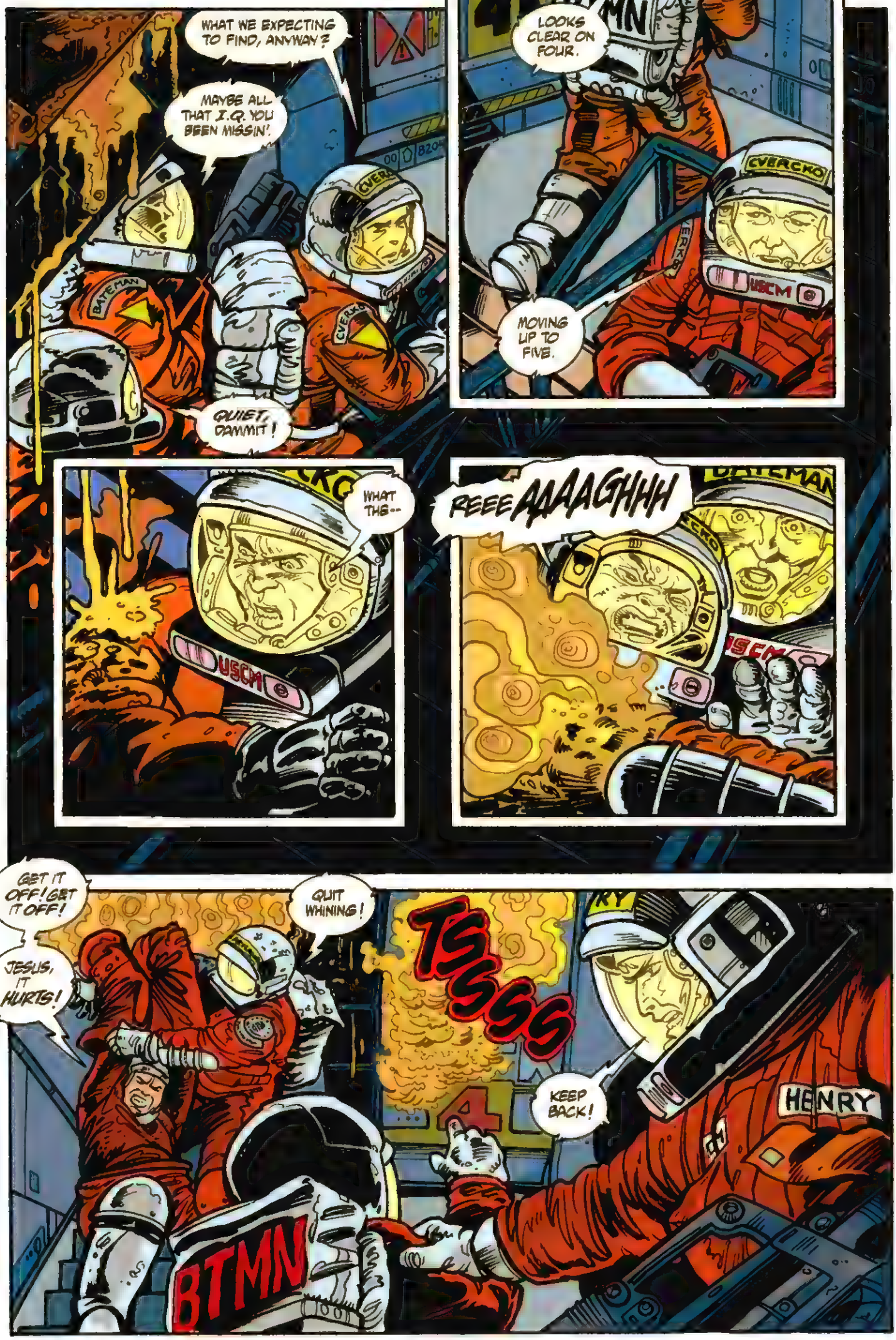
SAVE THE COMMENTARY FOR YOUR MEMOIRS, SLACKERS.
KEEP MOVING.
BECH

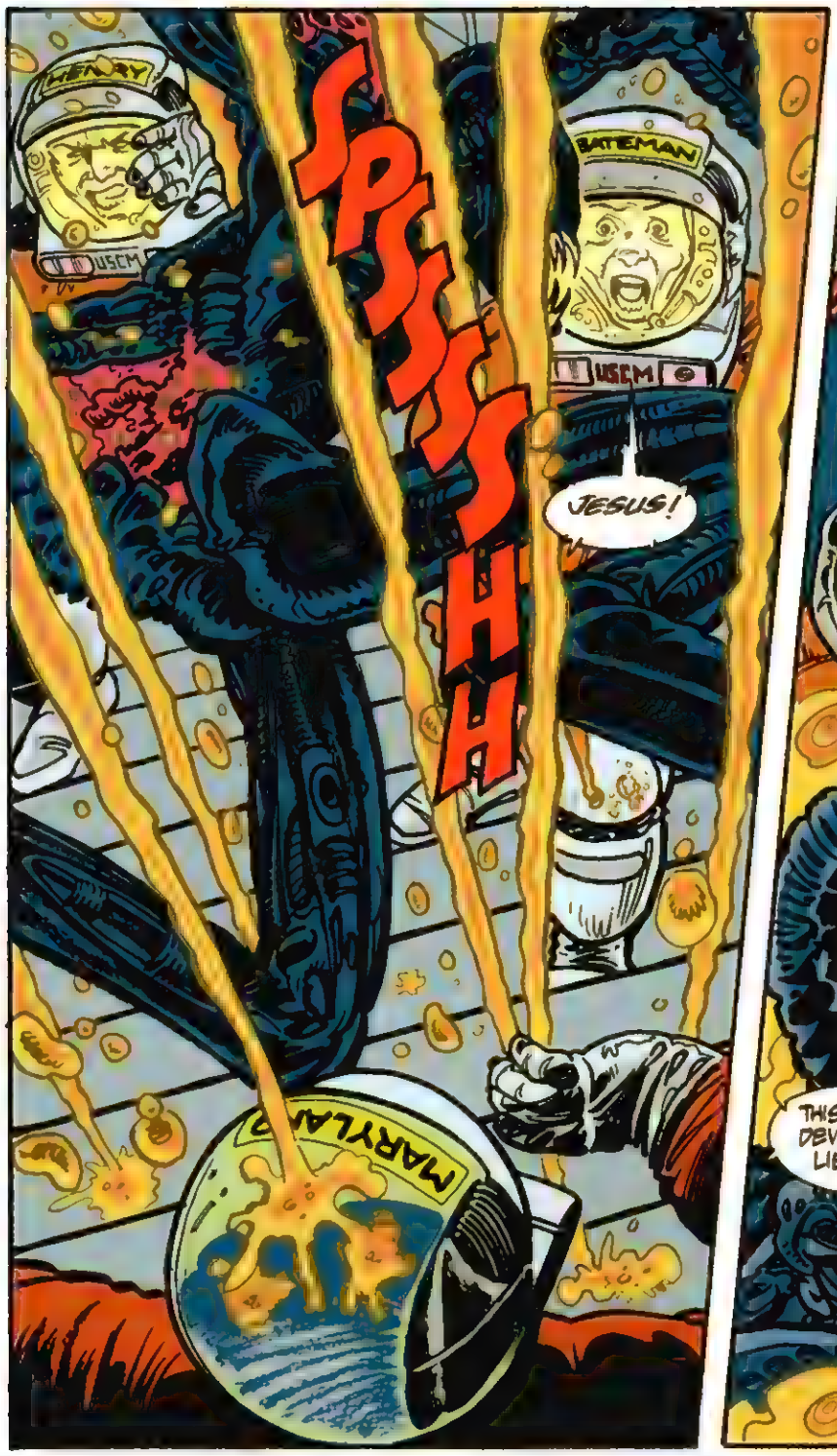

GET READY TO TAKE IN FIRST SQUAD ON MY COMMAND, SERGEANT.
ALL RIGHT, PEOPLE. TIME TO ACT LIKE MARINES.
VASQUEZ
USCM


VSQS
WELCOME TO THE SLINGUN

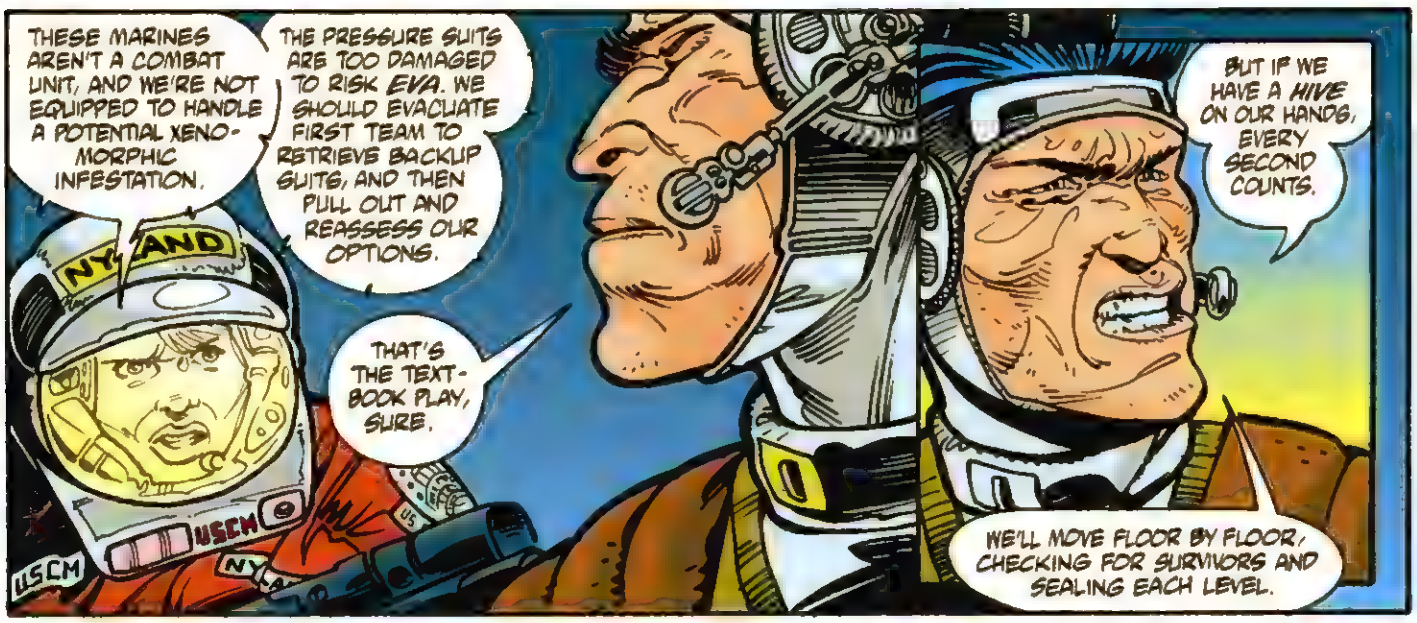

WAKE UP, CARRANO. READINGS?
OH, YEAH--
UH...NO MOVEMENT, SARGE.
SECOND SQUAD, SECURE THE STAIRWELL.
OPS
USCM

JOB ONE IS TO HEAD TO OPERATIONS--SEE IF VORMITAG AND HIS TEAM ARE IN THE VICINITY.
EASY ON THE TRIGGERS--WE DON'T WANT TO BODYBAG ANY CIVILIANS.
CVERCKO
USCM


WHAT WE EXPECTING TO FIND, ANYWAY?
MAYBE ALL THAT I.Q. YOU BEEN MISSIN'.
QUIET, DAMMIT!
LOOKS CLEAR ON FOUR.
MOVING UP TO FIVE.
WHAT THE--
REEE AAAAGHHH
GET IT OFF! GET IT OFF!
JESUS, IT HURTS!
QUIT WHINING!
TSSSS
KEEP BACK!
BTMN
HENRY


SPSSSSHH
HENRY
USCM
BATEMAN
USCM
JESUS!
MARYLAND

GET THOSE SUITS OFF!
NOW!
NYLAND
USCM
THAT'S A DAMN ALIEN!
THIS IS A SERIOUS DEVELOPMENT, LIEUTENANT.


THESE MARINES AREN'T A COMBAT UNIT, AND WE'RE NOT EQUIPPED TO HANDLE A POTENTIAL XENO-MORPHIC INFESTATION.
THE PRESSURE SUITS ARE TOO DAMAGED TO RISK EVA. WE SHOULD EVACUATE FIRST TEAM TO RETRIEVE BACKUP SUITS, AND THEN PULL OUT AND REASSESS OUR OPTIONS.
NYLAND
USCM
THAT'S THE TEXT-BOOK PLAY, SURE.
BUT IF WE HAVE A HIVE ON OUR HANDS, EVERY SECOND COUNTS.
WE'LL MOVE FLOOR BY FLOOR, CHECKING FOR SURVIVORS AND SEALING EACH LEVEL.

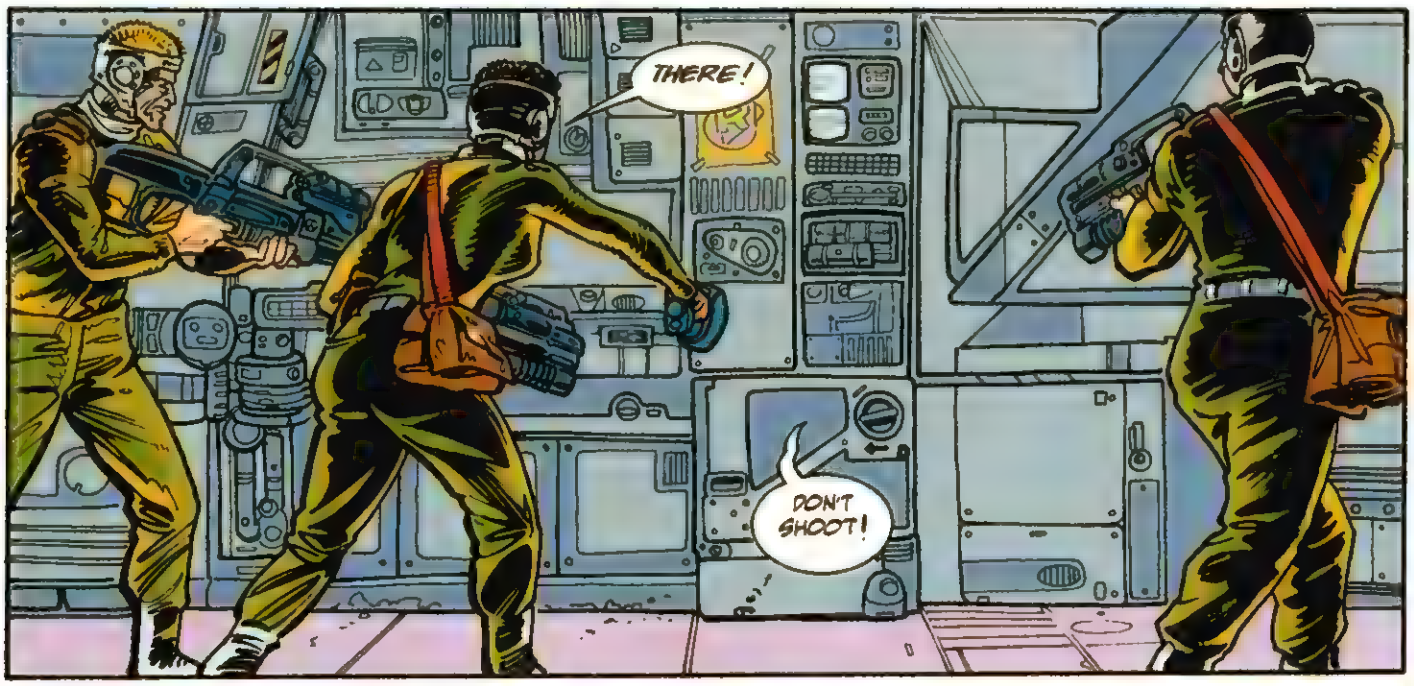
NYLAND
THIS WAY! MOVE!
ROSEMAS
CHEN
BEECH
VASQUEZ
USCM
NO WAY...
IS THAT WHAT I THINK IT IS?
AIN'T THAT ONE OF THE BUGS THAT TOOK OUT YOUR SISTER, VAS'?
INSECTO DIABLO...
LOOKS LIKE YOU'RE GONNA GET A CHANCE FOR SOME PAYBACK.

NO MOVEMENT.
GET THOSE SUITS OFF--WE DON'T WANT TO LOSE ANY MORE OF 'EM.
AND LOCK DOWN THE STAIRWELL PRESSURE GATE--WE DON'T WANT ANY BUGS IN THE HOUSE.
LOOKS LIKE SOMEBODY TRIED ALREADY. IT'S HOSED.
CAM 50.
THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE. PRESSURE GATES AREN'T ON THE MAIN POWER GRID. THEY HAVE THEIR OWN BATTERIES...
HEY, IT AIN'T MY FAULT!
SOMEBODY MUST'A HACKED IT.
I'LL TAKE MARYLAND AND BATEMAN TO SWEEP THE OPERATIONS PLATFORM. NYLAND, YOU TAKE THE REST AND SECURE THE FLOOR. SEE IF YOU CAN SCARE UP MORE EVA SUITS AT THE AIRLOCK.
CARRANO IN THE STAIRWELL, VASQUEZ AT THE GATE. CVERCKO WITH VASQUEZ.
LET'S DO IT.
HENRY
CHAK

LORD JESUS...

THAT SINKS IT. WE'RE DEALING WITH MORE THAN ONE BUG. NO TELLING HOW MANY--
MOVEMENT!

FIVE MISTERS...
BWEEP BWEEP BWEEP


THERE!
DON'T SHOOT!

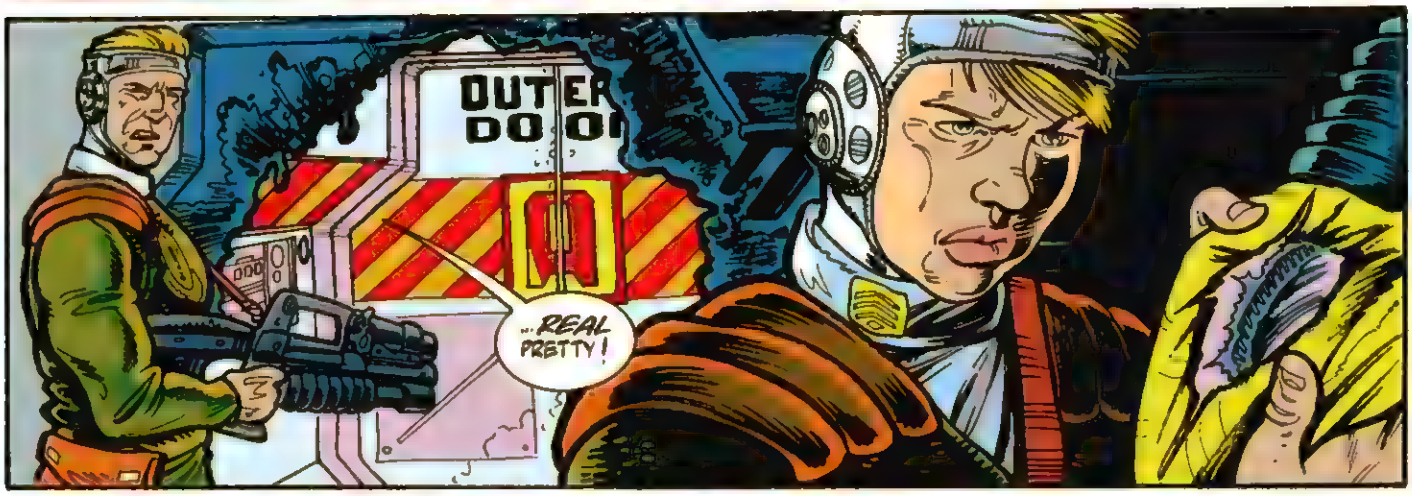
STAND DOWN...

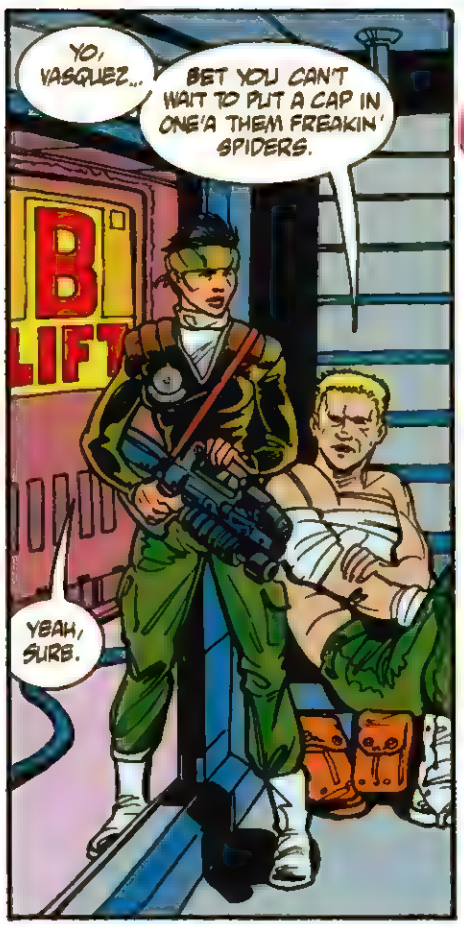
I'M ONE OF THE GOOD GUYS!

I DON'T WANNA BE A WET BLANKET...
JAYS IN
KINETICS
TAYLOR, MI.

...BUT YOU'RE ALL IN DEEP, DEEP CRAP.
JAYS IN

STATUS
LOCKED
THIS IS PRETTY...
LX 7

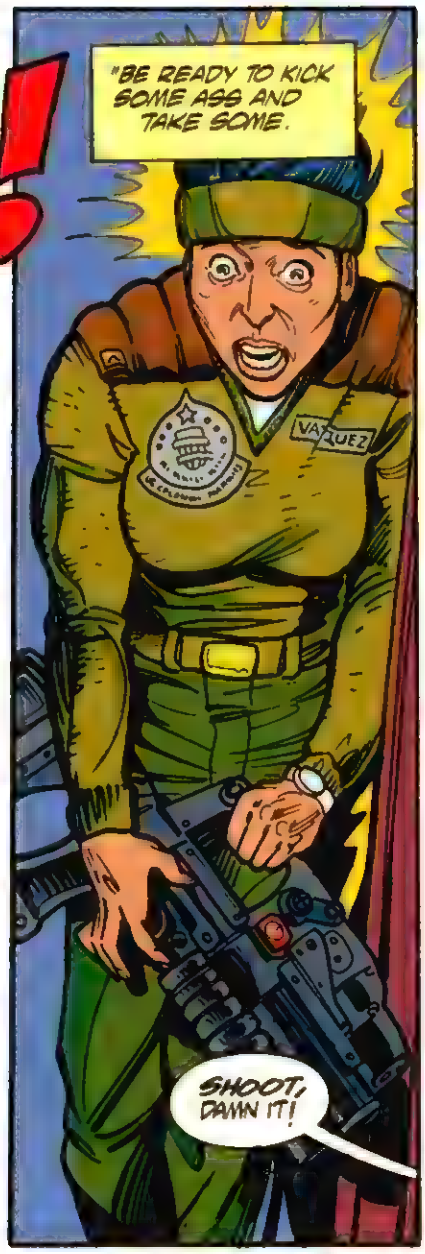

OUTER DOOR
...REAL PRETTY!

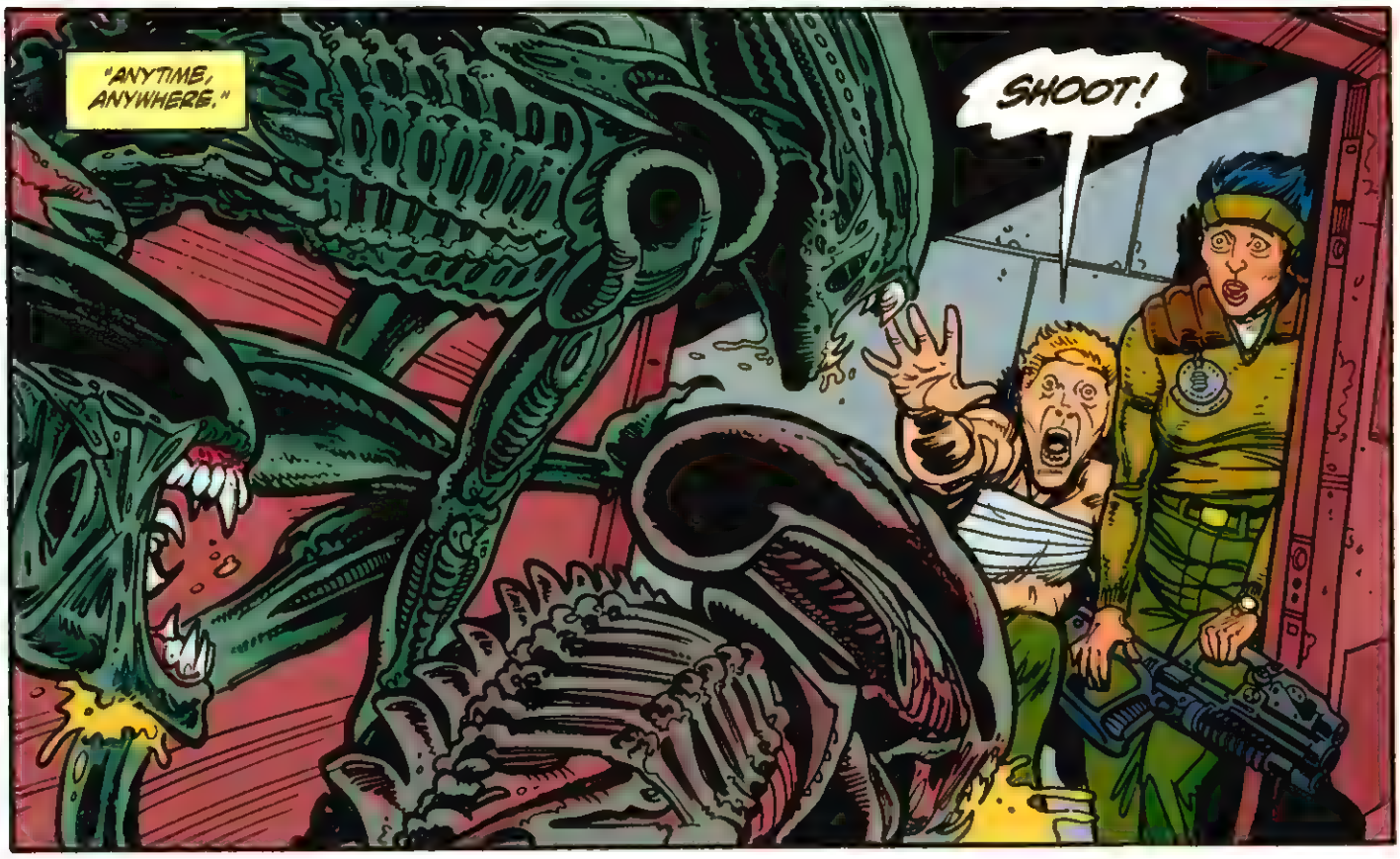

YO, VASQUEZ...
BET YOU CAN'T WAIT TO PUT A CAP IN ONE'A THEM FREAKIN' SPIDERS.
B
LIFT
YEAH, SURE.

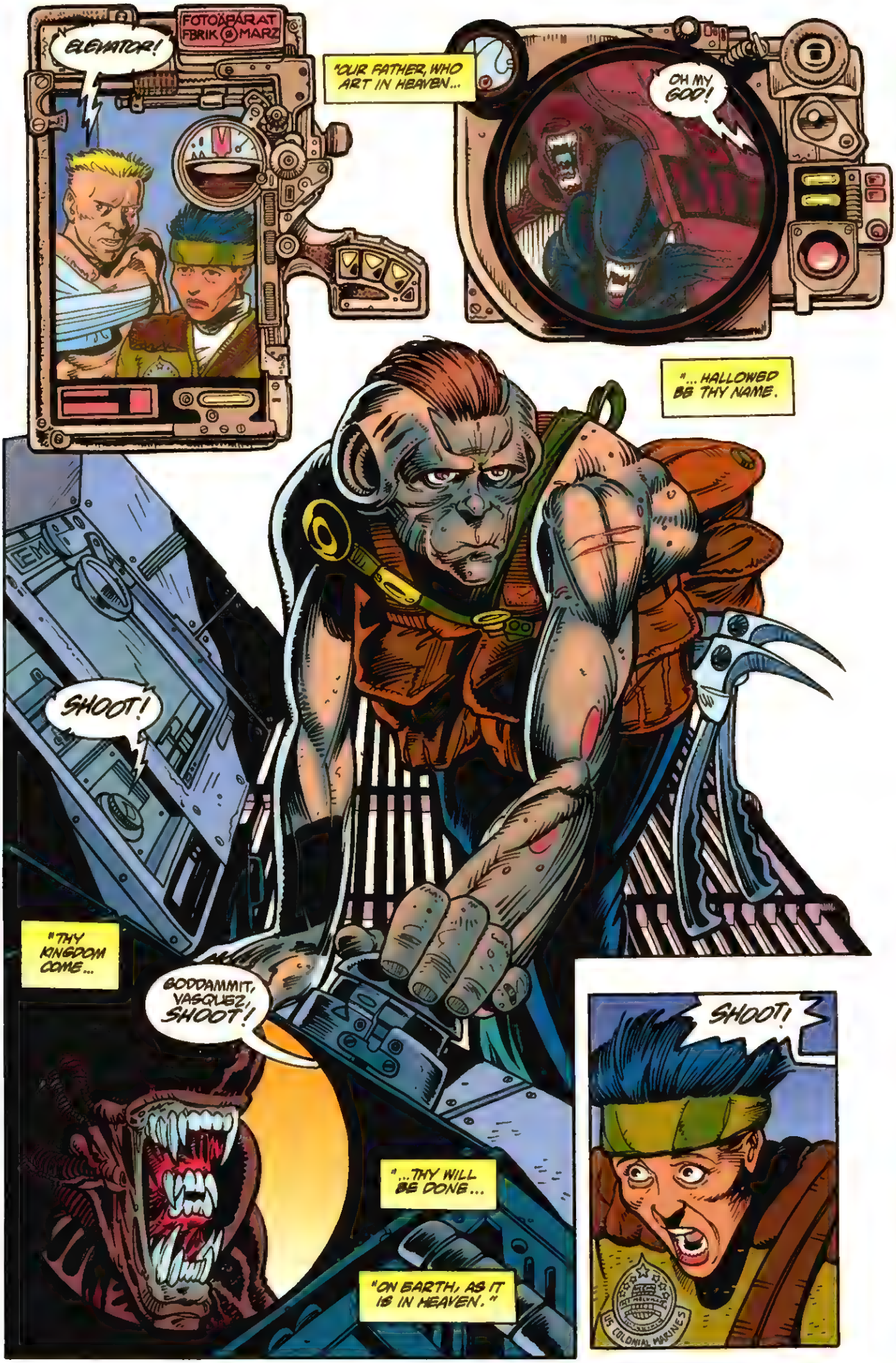
PSHHH HH
ELEVATOR!

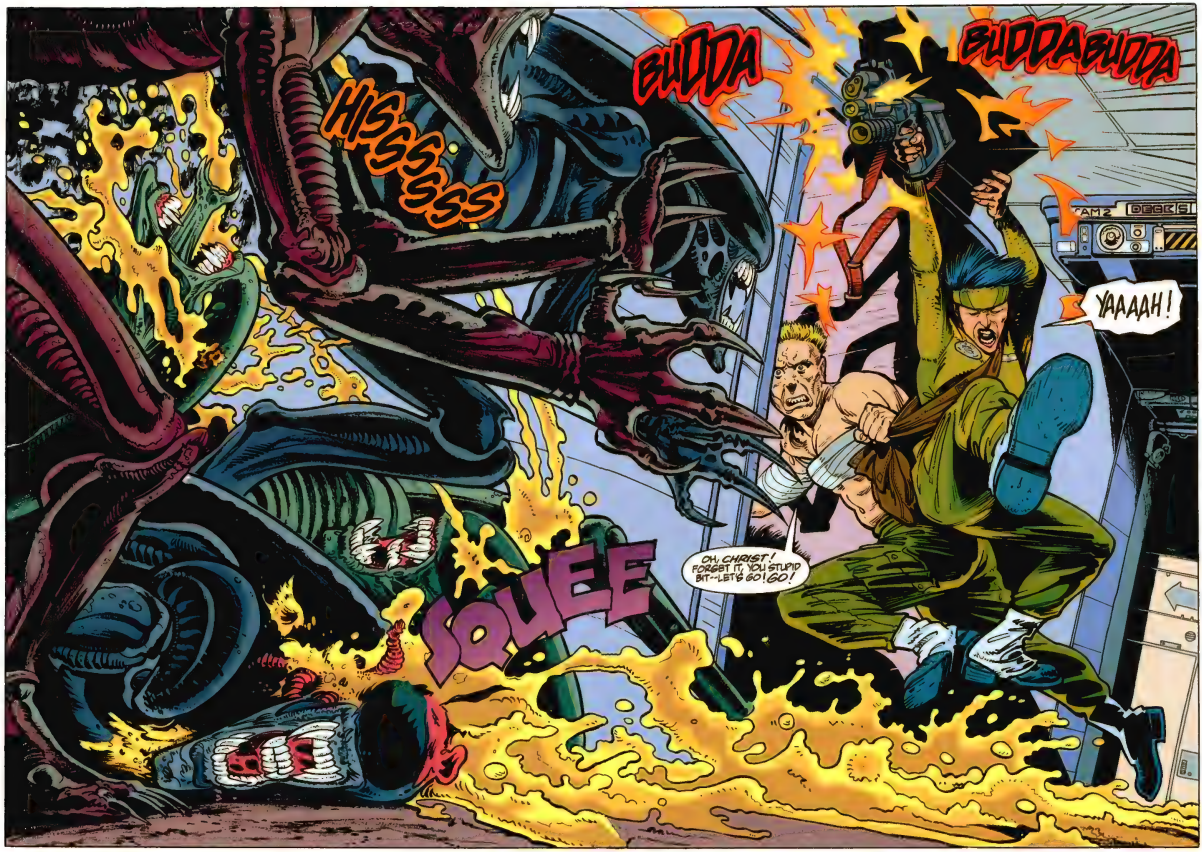
OH MY GOD!

"YOU BE LIKE ME, LITTLE CARMEN.
BWA-RANG!
SHOOT!


"BE READY TO KICK SOME ASS AND TAKE SOME.
VASQUEZ
SHOOT, DAMN IT!


"ANYTIME, ANYWHERE."
SHOOT!


FOTOAPARAT FBRIK MARZ
ELEVATOR!
"OUR FATHER, WHO ART IN HEAVEN...
OH MY GOD!
"... HALLOWED BE THY NAME.
SHOOT!
"THY KINGDOM COME...
GODDAMMIT, VASQUEZ, SHOOT!
"...THY WILL BE DONE...
"ON EARTH, AS IT IS IN HEAVEN."
SHOOT!
US COLONIAL MARINES

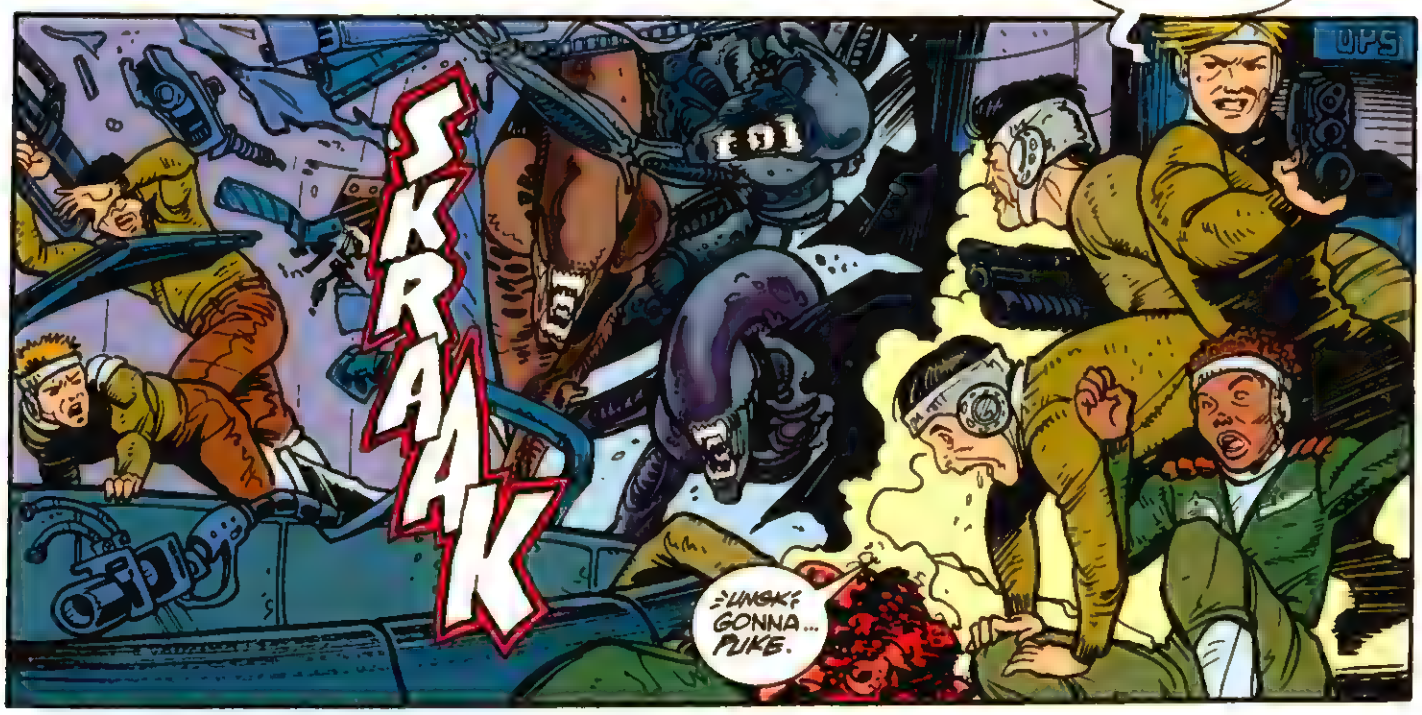

HISSSSSS
BUDDA
BUDDABUDDA
YAAAAH!
OH, CHRIST! FORGET IT, YOU STUPID BIT--LET'S GO! GO!
SQUEE

NO!
HISSSSS!
AAAH!
GET UP! MOVE IT!
UUUNNGH!
I'VE GOT HER!
GGNNGH! MY...ARM...!

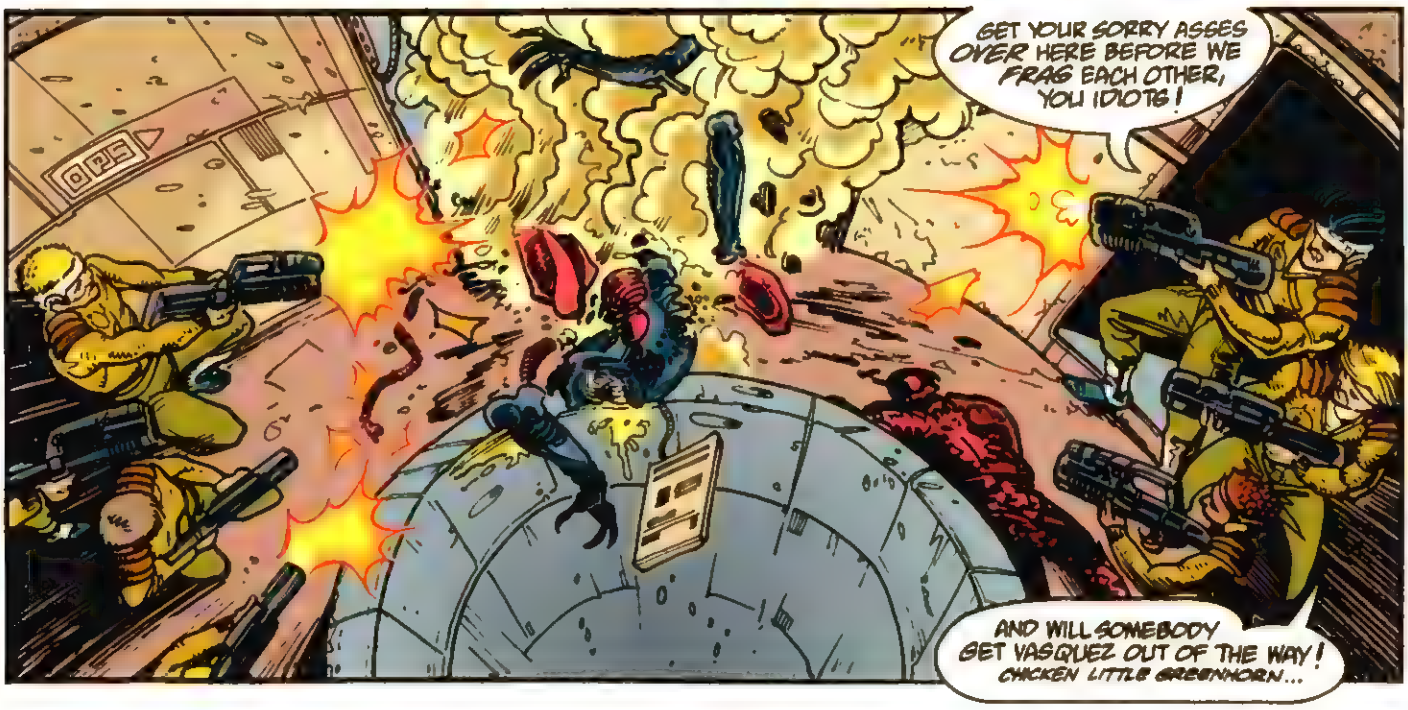
MARYLAND--STATUS! WHAT'S HAPPENING OUT THERE?
UH... ALL QUIET ...THEY'RE GONE!
THEN LET'S HEAD TO OPS--
HUNH?

YAAAAH!
OPS
BUDDA BUDDA
:GLURK:

K-KILL IT... KILL IT!
CEASE FIRE! CONSERVE YOUR AMMO! IT WAS JUST A--
..STRAGGLER...


SKRAAK
OPS
:UNSK: GONNA... PUKE.

BUDDA
BUDDA
WATCH THE CROSSFIRE! CHECK YOUR TARGETS!!
BUDDA
THEY KEEP COMIN'!
AAAIEE!
VIP
VIP


GET YOUR SORRY ASSES OVER HERE BEFORE WE FRAG EACH OTHER, YOU IDIOTS!
AND WILL SOMEBODY GET VASQUEZ OUT OF THE WAY! CHICKEN LITTLE GREENHORN...

OH...MAN!
I AIN'T UP FOR THIS CRAP!
GET IN HERE, MARINE!
GET BENT, YA GUNG HO GEEK!
?KAFF?
CAN'T SEE SQUAT...
JUST SHOOT, BEECH!
WHAT'RE WE GONNA DO, KOO?
GRAB THESE EVA* SUITS AND BUG OUT...
*EXTRA VEHICULAR ACTIVITY--Ya Editor
...ONCE WE GET BACK TO...THE ...MELVILLE...
OH...MAN...!

BUDDA BUDDA BUDDA
I'M NOT GONNA BUY IT IN THIS FLOATING TOILET!
BUDDA BUDDA
ROSEMAS! HELP!
KOO
YLAND
KOFF! KOFF!
LIEUTENANT! WE'RE BEING FLANKED! OUR BACKSIDES ARE OUT IN THE BREEZE!
NNGYAAAAAH!

KOO...? KOO!
BUDDA
BUDDA BUDDA
YOU BROKE RANK, SOLDIER...
BUDDA
BE GRATEFUL YOU AREN'T PAYING FOR THAT MISTAKE!
WHAT IN HELL IS GOING ON HERE?
WE'RE KEEPING OUR ASSES COVERED, SIR. RIGHT, ROBMAB?
UH...YEAH...

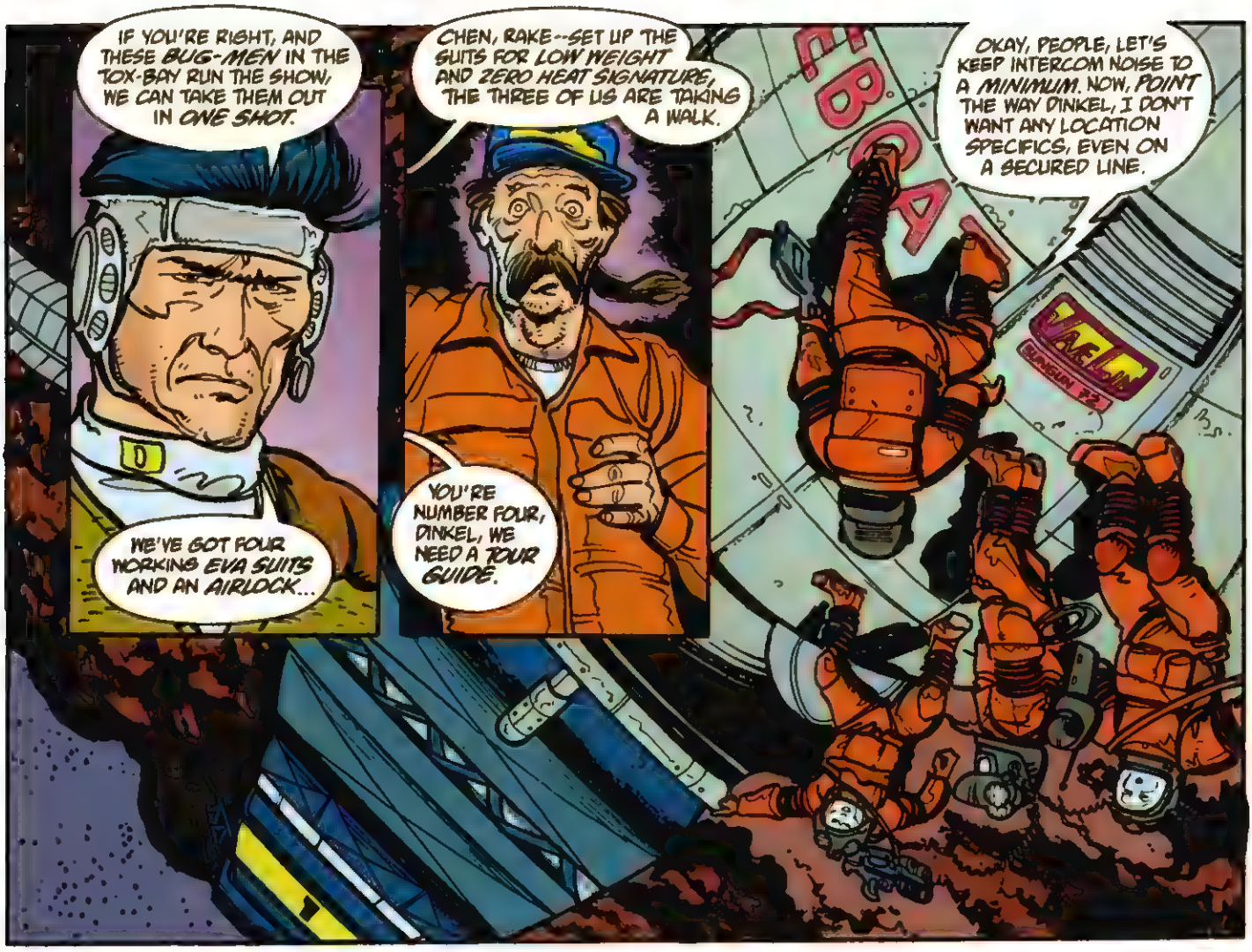
WE'RE STILL OUTNUMBERED, LIEUTENANT...WE'LL BE DEAD IF WE DON'T GET OUT OF HERE-- FAST!
DO SOMETHING! AREN'T YOU GOING TO DO SOMETHING!?!
MELVILLE
IT'S BEEN NEARLY AN HOUR SINCE WE'VE HEARD FROM VORMITAG...
WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO?
I APPRECIATE YOUR CONCERNS, MR. BELIVEAU, BUT WE WILL SIMPLY HAVE TO WAIT UNTIL COMMUNICATIONS ARE RESTORED. WE CAN THEN ASSESS THE SITUATION. AND AFTER ALL, REINFORCEMENTS ARE THREE WEEKS AWAY.
WHAT ABOUT YOU?
YOU'RE A SPECIALLY MODIFIED SYNTHETIC, BUILT TO HANDLE CERTAIN... FORSEEABLE ENCOUNTERS. SHOULDN'T YOU AT LEAST...
DUE TO MY SUBSTANTIAL DOLLAR VALUE, I AM NOT AUTHORIZED TO ENGAGE IN POTENTIALLY HOSTILE OPS UNLESS CERTAIN THRESHOLDS...
21
20

OKAY, MARINES, THIS IS THE PLAN...
WE GRAB THE FUNCTIONAL EVA SUITS AND FIND A WAY BACK TO THE MELVILLE. WE CAN RE-ASSESS THE OP FROM THERE.
DINKEL! IS THERE AN ESCAPE POD ON THIS ROCK?
FREE
UH... YEAH, AT THE TOP OF THE ZERO-G WELL--
LIFEPOD
--BUT THE HATCH CONTROLS ARE LOCKED OUT. THERE'S NO WAY OUTTA HERE, MAN!
DINKEL
SOME PLAN.
NYLAND! GET EVERYONE TO THE 2-G WELL! WE'RE HEADING UP TO LEVEL FOUR. GOT THAT?
AFFIRMATIVE!
THE TOX BAY... THAT'S WHERE THE BUGS SET UP SHOP!
WHAT'S BELOW US?
THEN THEY'LL BE ALL OVER US ANY MINUTE...
YEAH... HE'S A GENIUS.
OOOOOH... I GOT GAS!
HEADS UP! I GOT SPIDERS ON MY ASS!

THEN GET YOUR POSTERIOR UP HERE, BEECH, OR IT'LL GET SHOT OFF IN THE CROSSFIRE!
STAND AND DELIVER, MARINES! BUT CONSERVE YOUR AMMO AND CHECK YOUR AIM—ZERO G CAN SCREW YOU UP GOOD!
HENRY
BERGANZA! GET UP HERE!
BUDDA
BUDDA BUDDA
DAMN—HE'S PANICKING! SOMEBODY GRAB HIM!
C'MON, GIVE ME YOUR HAND BERGANZA!
HUCK!

WHAT ARE WE WAITING FOR ?!?
GET ME SOMEONE WITH TECH TRAINING UP HERE !
HUNH ?
SHOVE OVER, YOU'RE IN MY WAY.
I TOLD YOU—WE'RE LOCKED OUT ! KEE-RIST, I SHOULDA STAYED IN MY FRIGGIN' BOX...
YOU OKAY, VASQUEZ ?
SHUNK
LET'S GO ! MOVE IT !
YOU TOO, LIEUTENANT !
HEY !
POW
RIGHT WITH YOU, SARG--
BUDDA
POW

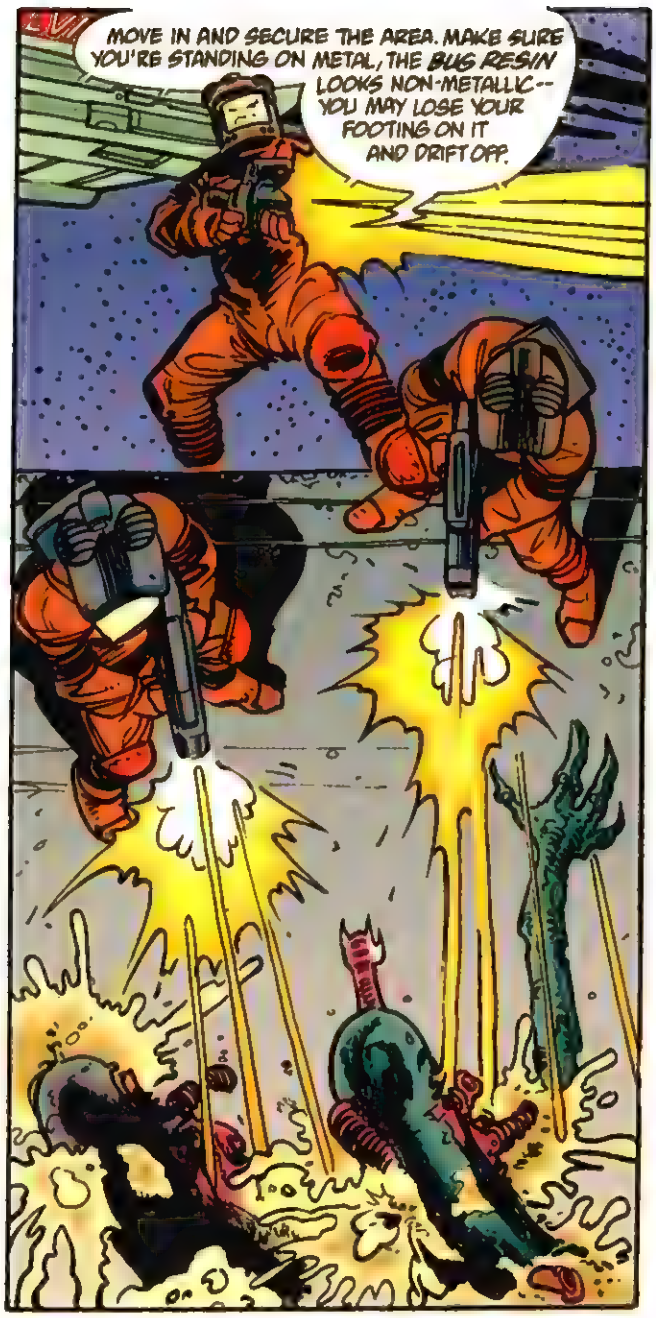
SLAM
THAT HATCH WON'T HOLD FOR LONG...
I KNOW, WE'VE GOT TO STOP THEM... SOMEHOW.
BULL! FREAKIN' SPIDERS WASTED MY BROTHER BACK ON EARTH! I WANT PAYBACK!
WE'VE GOT TO GET OUT OF HERE!
THEY TORE THAT BULKHEAD LIKE PAPER!
THERE ARE SO MANY...
ALL RIGHT, GARBAGE MAN... WHAT'S THE LAYOUT? YOU WERE IN THERE LONG ENOUGH TO KNOW WHAT THOSE BUGS ARE UP TO.
CAN YOU TELL ME WHERE THE HIVE IS?
TOX-BAY.
JAE IN
BUT IT'S WEIRD, MAN, THERE ARE MEN...I MEAN, HUMANS DOWN THERE ORDERING THE BUGS AROUND! THEY AREN'T, LIKE, REGULAR HUMANS ...THEY'RE BUGGED OUT! AND THEY PRAY TO SOME "FATHER" LIKE CHOIRBOYS, Y'KNOW?
THE HEATHENS ARE TRAPPED, FATHER, BUT THE JUDAS IS NOT AMONG THEM. WHAT SHOULD I DO?
KILL THEM! THEY ARE THE PAWNS OF THE COMPANY...PLAGUE DOGS THAT MUST BE PUT DOWN.


IF YOU'RE RIGHT, AND THESE BUG-MEN IN THE TOX-BAY RUN THE SHOW, WE CAN TAKE THEM OUT IN ONE SHOT.
WE'VE GOT FOUR WORKING EVA SUITS AND AN AIRLOCK...
CHEN, RAKE--SET UP THE SUITS FOR LOW WEIGHT AND ZERO HEAT SIGNATURE, THE THREE OF US ARE TAKING A WALK.
YOU'RE NUMBER FOUR, DINKEL, WE NEED A TOUR GUIDE.
OKAY, PEOPLE, LET'S KEEP INTERCOM NOISE TO A MINIMUM. NOW, POINT THE WAY DINKEL, I DON'T WANT ANY LOCATION SPECIFICS, EVEN ON A SECURED LINE.

THIS IS IT? DINKEL AND RAKE--POP THE SARDINE CAN. CHEN AND I WILL COVER OUR BACKS.
SARDINE CAN? YOU MEAN THE HA--
SHUT YA GOB, YOU HIPPY!
OH, RIGHT! SORRY...

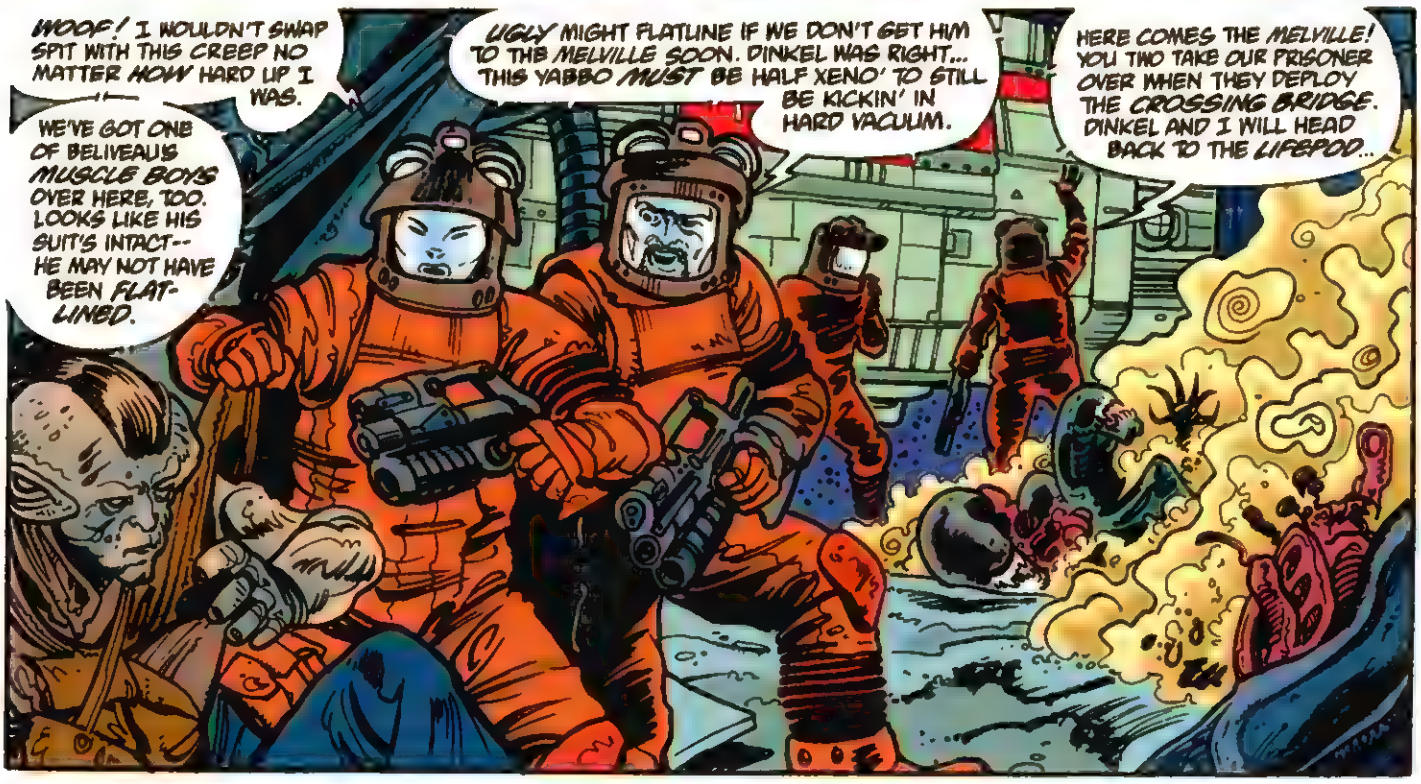
VISORS DOWN. I WANT HEAT SIGNATURES KEPT TO MINIMUM!
WHAT'S THE HOLD UP, DINKEL?
QUIT HASSLING ME! I DON'T DO THIS EVERY DAY.
INSTRUCTIONS
WARNING
WHAT? EMERGENCY HATCH PURGE--THOSE HEATHENS! HEATHENS!
HERE IT GOES!
TAKE YOUR POSITIONS AND HANG TIGHT! REMEMBER, EVERY ROUND COUNTS, SO FIRE WITH SHORT BURSTS.

JACKPOT!
NAW! THIS IS LIKE SHOOTING PRAWNS IN A BUCKET!
DON'T GET TOO COCKY, RAKS. THERE MAY BE STRAGGLERS IN THE TOW-WAY.
GOOD SHOOTING, MARINES! WITH ANY LUCK, THE MELVILLE WILL PICK UP ON OUR LITTLE FIREWORKS SHOW AND SEND THE CROSSING BRIDGE OVER HERE.
MR. BELIVEAU, I SUGGEST YOU SWITCH YOUR MONITOR TO CAMERA SEVEN.
GOOD, GOD!
THOSE APPEAR TO BE XENOMORPHS, WHICH WOULD EXPLAIN THE RADIO SILENCE. IT IS REPORTED THAT XENOMORPH HIVES DISRUPT ELECTRICAL PATTERNS.
LIEUTENANT HENRY, HOWEVER, SEEMS TO HAVE THE SITUATION WELL IN HAND.

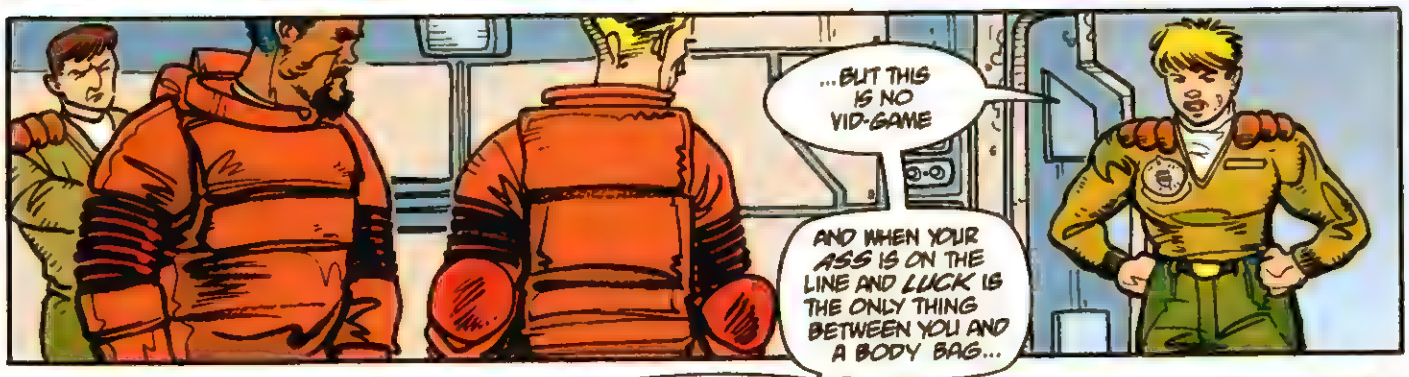

MOVE IN AND SECURE THE AREA. MAKE SURE YOU'RE STANDING ON METAL, THE BUG RESIN LOOKS NON-METALLIC-- YOU MAY LOSE YOUR FOOTING ON IT AND DRIFT OFF.

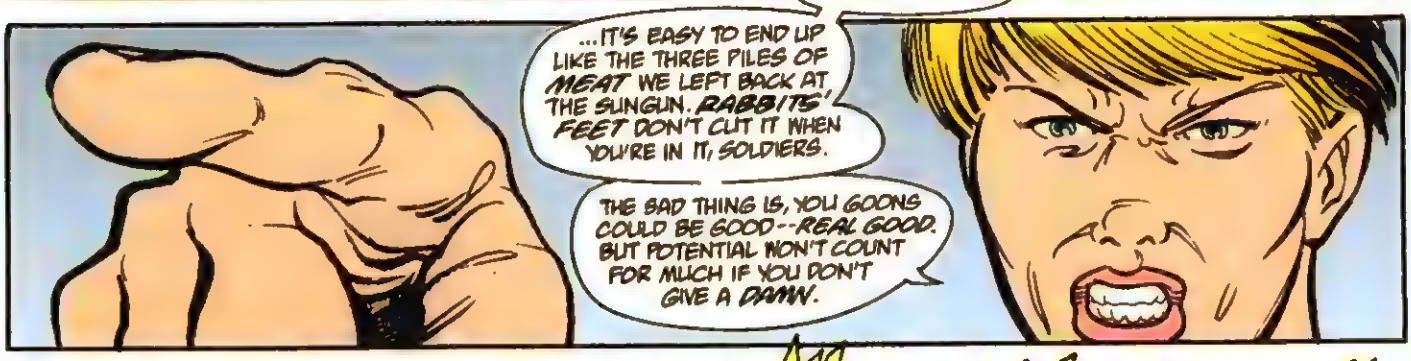
COME AND GET IT!
I THINK WE'RE SECURE, LIEUTENANT.

DITTO, I SHOW NO MOVEMENT--HOLD IT! STRIKE THAT, I'VE GOT TWO BOGIES, POSSIBLY FRIENDLY, DEFINITELY HUMANOID!


WOOF! I WOULDN'T SWAP SPIT WITH THIS CREEP NO MATTER HOW HARD UP I WAS.
WE'VE GOT ONE OF BELIVEAU'S MUSCLE BOYS OVER HERE, TOO. LOOKS LIKE HIS SUIT'S INTACT-- HE MAY NOT HAVE BEEN FLAT-LINED.
UGLY MIGHT FLATLINE IF WE DON'T GET HIM TO THE MELVILLE SOON. DINKEL WAS RIGHT... THIS YABBO MUST BE HALF XENO' TO STILL BE KICKIN' IN HARD VACUUM.
HERE COMES THE MELVILLE! YOU TWO TAKE OUR PRISONER OVER WHEN THEY DEPLOY THE CROSSING BRIDGE. DINKEL AND I WILL HEAD BACK TO THE LIFEPOD...

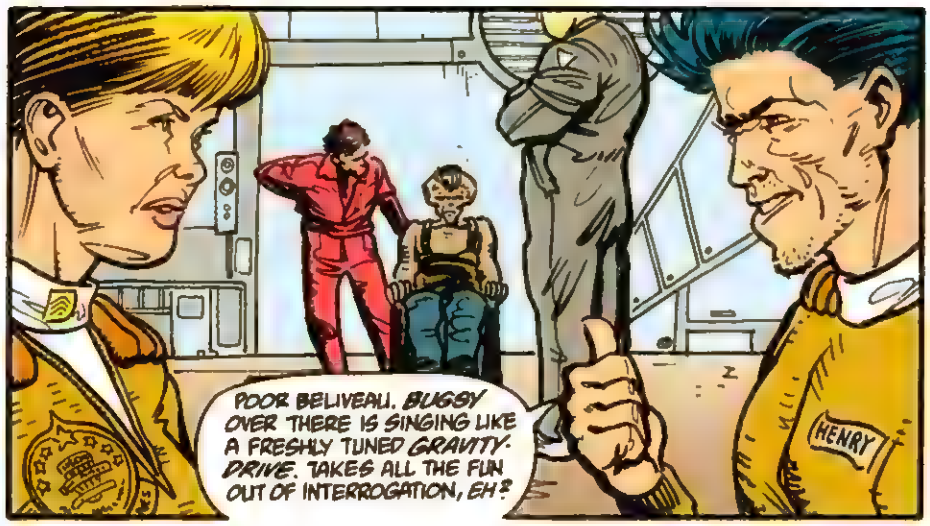
"...HAVE BOSTON PICK US UP AFTER WE JETTISON LOOSE FROM THIS ROCK."
SEMPER FI, BIG MAN!
GETTIN' OUT OF THE FIRE WITH YOUR BUTT INTACT IS A GREAT FEELING, ENNITT?
I'M GLAD YOU ENJOYED YOURSELF, PRIVATE...


...BUT THIS IS NO VID-GAME
AND WHEN YOUR ASS IS ON THE LINE AND LUCK IS THE ONLY THING BETWEEN YOU AND A BODY BAG...


...IT'S EASY TO END UP LIKE THE THREE PILES OF MEAT WE LEFT BACK AT THE SUNGUN. RABBITS' FEET DON'T CUT IT WHEN YOU'RE IN IT, SOLDIERS.
THE BAD THING IS, YOU GOONS COULD BE GOOD--REAL GOOD. BUT POTENTIAL WON'T COUNT FOR MUCH IF YOU DON'T GIVE A DAMN.

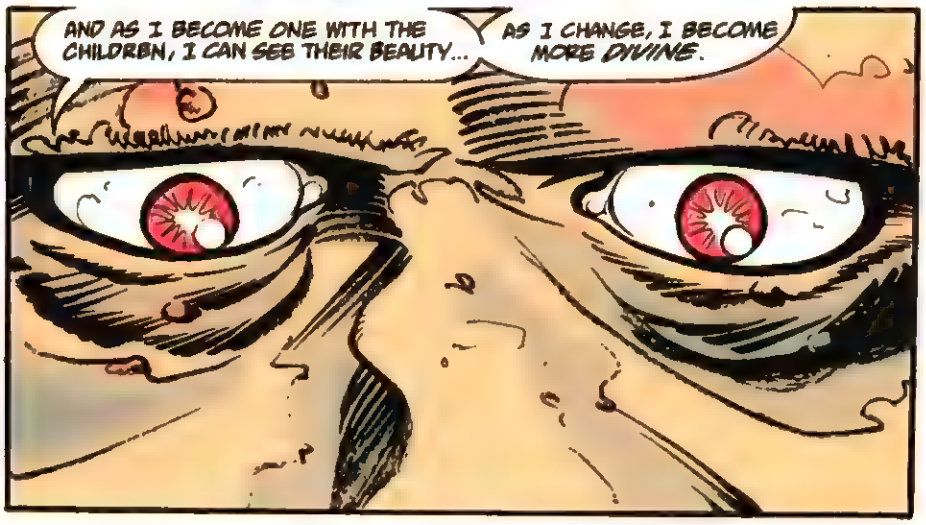
HAH
HAH
HAH
HAH

...AND AFTER WE GOT VORMITAG INTO SICK BAY, BELIVEAU DECIDED TO GRILL OUR NEW GUEST.
HOW IS VORMITAG? DO WE KNOW THAT HE'S CLEAN?
SURE. SCANNED HIM FOR IMPREGNATION RIGHT OFF. NEGATIVE. HOW THE HELL HE GOT AWAY WITH JUST A BUMP ON HIS HEAD...YOU ASK ME, WE SHOULD BE GRILLING HIM!
...ALL WILL BE AS IN HEAVEN, FREE OF THE SINS OF MAN...


POOR BELIVEAU. BUGSY OVER THERE IS SINGING LIKE A FRESHLY TUNED GRAVITY-DRIVE. TAKES ALL THE FUN OUT OF INTERROGATION, EH?
HENRY

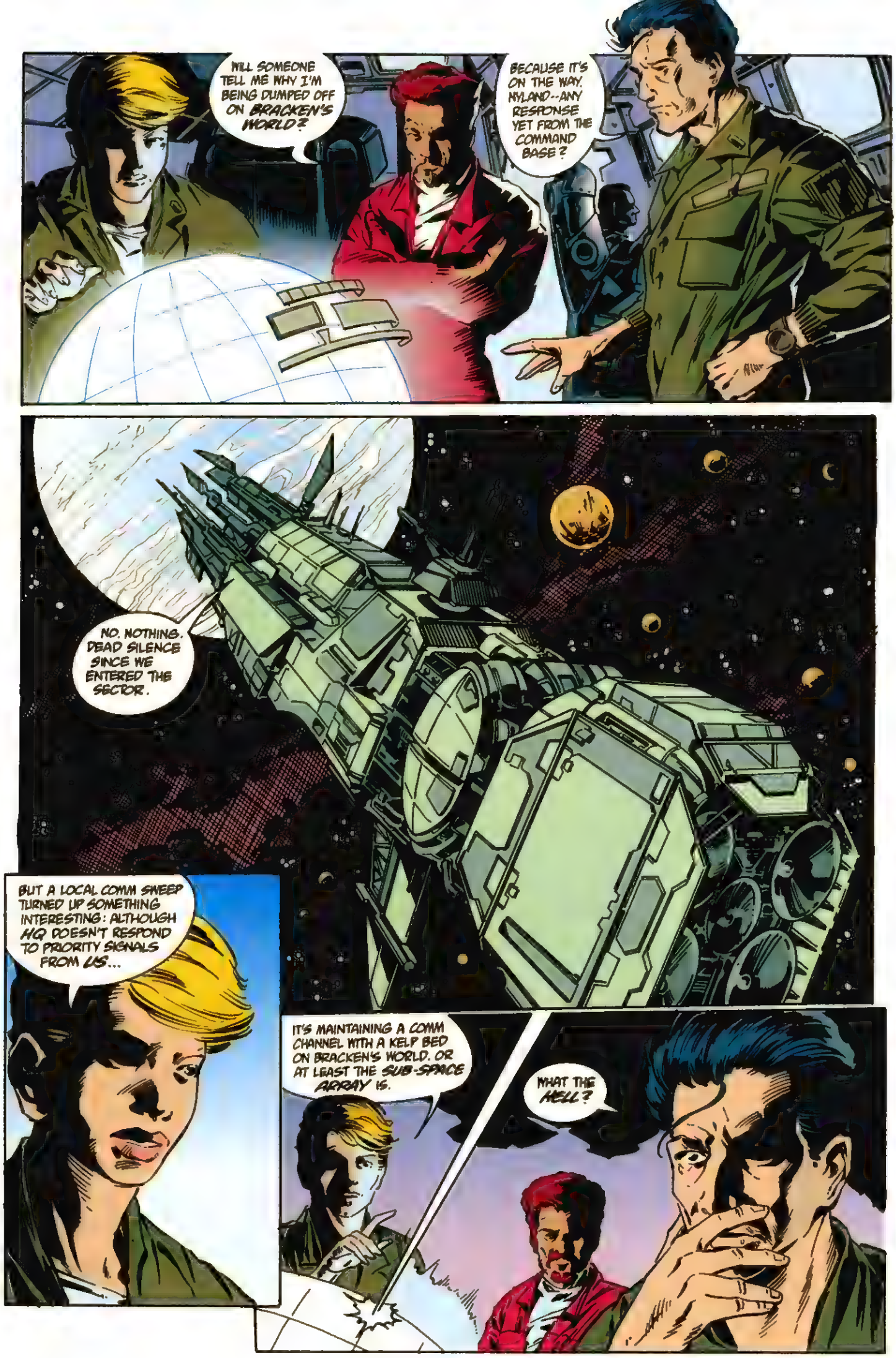
IT WILL BE AS IT ONCE WAS... EMPTY... PURE. SPACE IS FOR THE CHILDREN OF THE FATHER, NOT THE BASTARD CHILDREN OF GOD.
THE MOTHER COULD NOT SEE THAT... SHE WAS WEAK. ALL SHE COULD SEE WAS THE NEED TO SURVIVE. THE FATHER KNOWS THAT SPACE IS CORRUPT... POISONED.

IT MUST BE CLEANSED, SWEPT FREE OF THE PLAGUE OF HUMANITY BY THE MIGHT OF THE CHILDREN ...THE TRUE ANGELS.


AND AS I BECOME ONE WITH THE CHILDREN, I CAN SEE THEIR BEAUTY...
AS I CHANGE, I BECOME MORE DIVINE.

IN SPACE...
REMEMBER THIS DAY, MR. CORCHIANI, FOR THIS IS THE DAY YOU FIRST SAW THE FACE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS.
AS YOU ARE NOW, I WAS ONCE A MINDLESS CREATURE, SPEWING MY FILTH AND GREED INTO THE VASTNESS OF SPACE. A FOOL WHO THOUGHT HERSELF IMPORTANT SIMPLY BECAUSE SHE HAD RISEN ABOVE THE OTHER MEWLING CRETINS.
THE FATHER SOUGHT ME OUT, BRINGING ME HERE SO THAT MY PITIFUL KNOWLEDGE MAY BENEFIT HIS STRUGGLE.
OTHERS JOINED ME -- MINERS, PILOTS, COMMANDERS, RAILGUN MANAGERS... LEADERS OF A WRETCHED HUMANITY.
IT WAS THEN THAT WE SAW THE TRUTH, AND LEARNED TO LEAD A RIGHTEOUS ARMY AGAINST THE HEATHEN PLAGUE OF HUMANITY.

WELCOME TO HEAVEN, MR. CORCHIANI, AND REJOICE.


WILL SOMEONE TELL ME WHY I'M BEING DUMPED OFF ON BRACKEN'S WORLD?
BECAUSE IT'S ON THE WAY. NYLAND--ANY RESPONSE YET FROM THE COMMAND BASE?
NO. NOTHING. DEAD SILENCE SINCE WE ENTERED THE SECTOR.
BUT A LOCAL COMM SWEEP TURNED UP SOMETHING INTERESTING: ALTHOUGH HQ DOESN'T RESPOND TO PRIORITY SIGNALS FROM US...
IT'S MAINTAINING A COMM CHANNEL WITH A KELP BED ON BRACKEN'S WORLD. OR AT LEAST THE SUB-SPACE ARRAY IS.
WHAT THE HELL?

BEECH.
WHAT THE HELL YOU WANT?
I HAVE SOMETHING FOR YOU, BEECH.
SCREW YOU.
ROYAL JELLY, BEECH. PURE.
BULL.
YOU DOUBT ME, BEECH? TASTE IT.
SKRETCH
MMM. STICKY...
UMM! THIS IS SMOOTH!
I TOLD YOU HE'D LIKE IT.
KORMITAG?
WELCOME TO THE CLUB, MARINE.

AS YOU WERE. WE'RE NOW IN ORBIT ABOVE AN AGRI-COLONY CALLED BRACKENS WORLD. THE GRO-PROFILES ON DISK-- REVIEW IT.

SERGEANT NYLAND WILL TAKE LISTON AND ESCORT THE ALPHA-TECH MEMBERS TO THE MAIN CITY. THE REST OF YOU ARE WITH ME.

WE'LL BE CHECKING OUT A SURFACE ANOMALY THAT MAY OR MAY NOT BE A MARINE BASE. IT'S A STANDARD RECON OP, BUT AFTER WHAT HAPPENED AT THE SUNBURN STATION WE'RE GOING IN WITH OUR EYES OPEN...

...SO LISTEN UP, PEOPLE: I WANT FULL DEB WITH BACK-UP...

PASS IT DOWN.

READY FOR ANOTHER HIT, CHEN?

...AND TACTICAL INTERFACE EXAMINATION BY THIRTY HUNDRED HOURS...

MMM. ALWAYS.

YOU DON'T LOOK SO GOOD, VASQUEZ. HOW YOU BEEN SLEEPIN'?

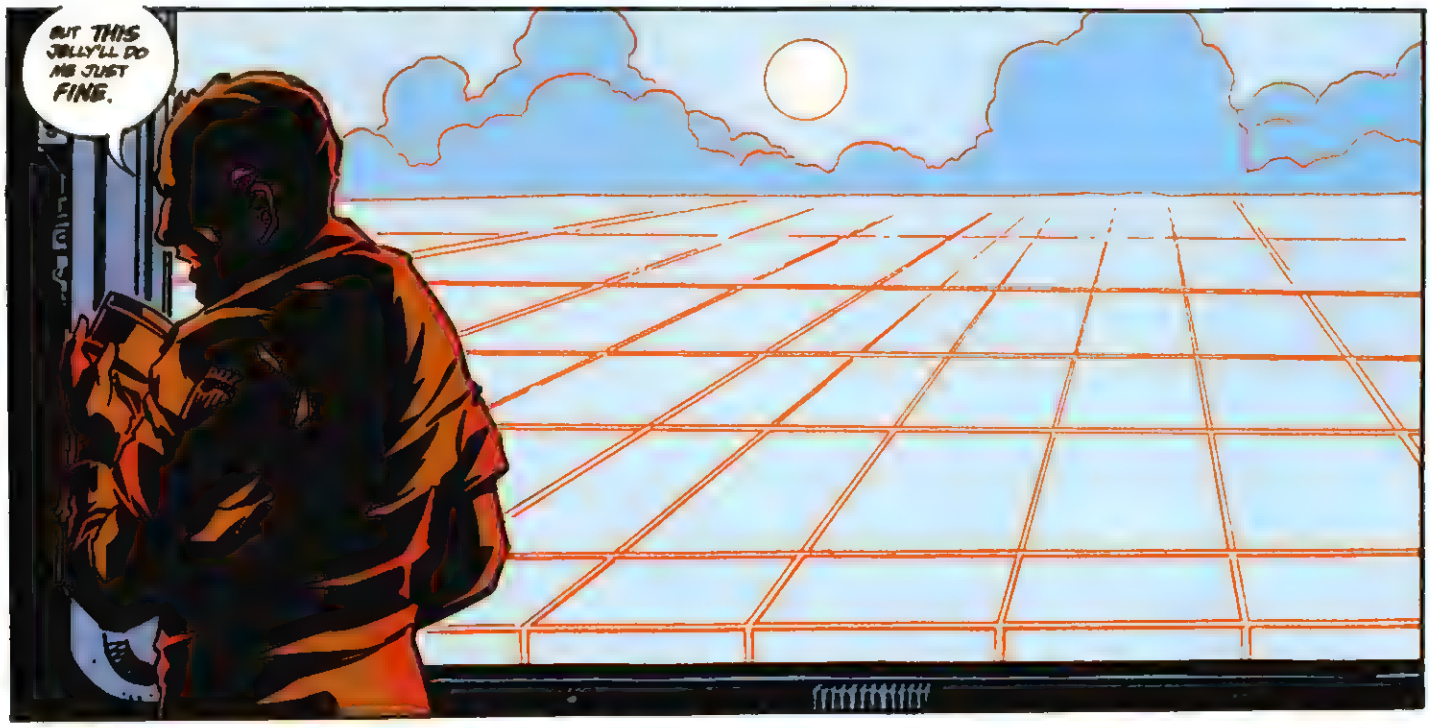
...ORDNANCE LOADING, WEAPONS STRIP AND PROPWASH PREP DETAILS HAVE BOT FIVE HOURS.

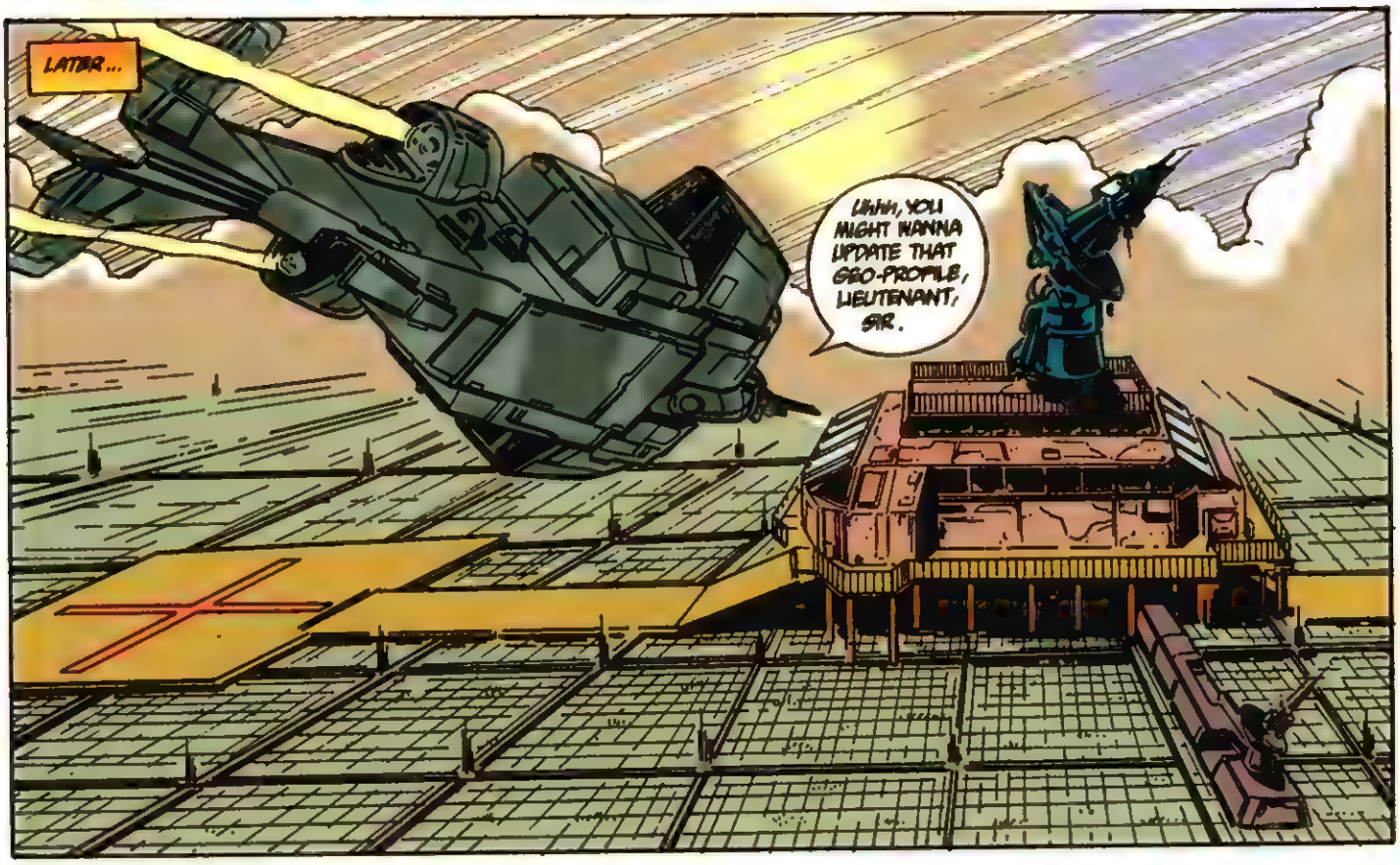
BEEN THINKIN' ABOUT THE BUGS? ABOUT HOW YOU CHOKED?

YOU GOT NOWHERE, CONWAY?

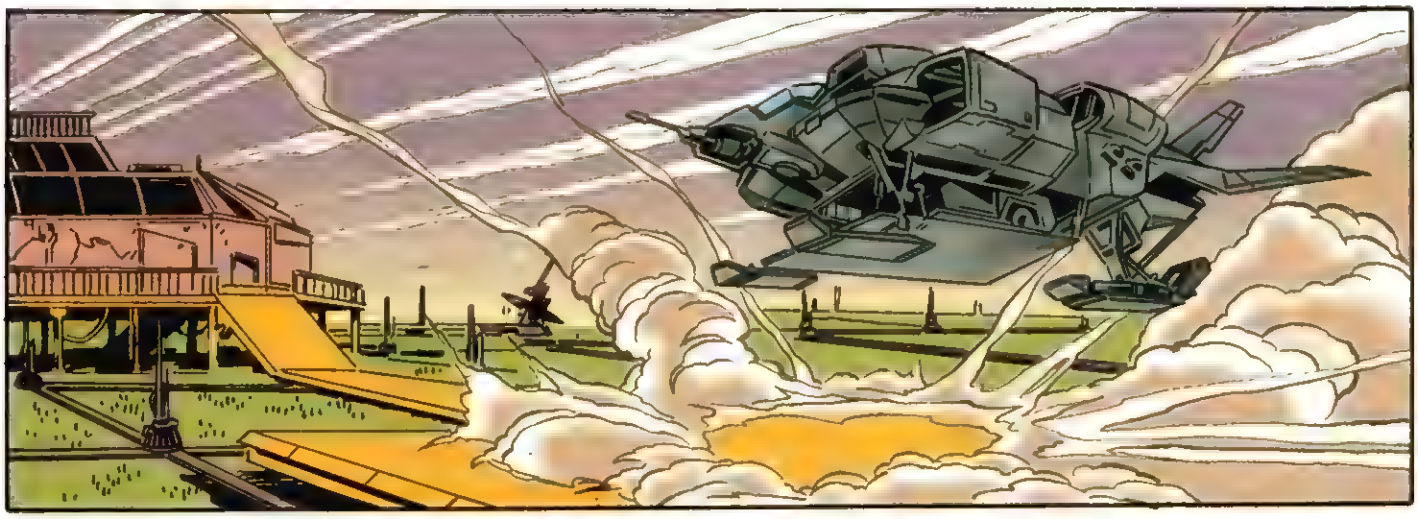
GLAD TO HEAR IT...

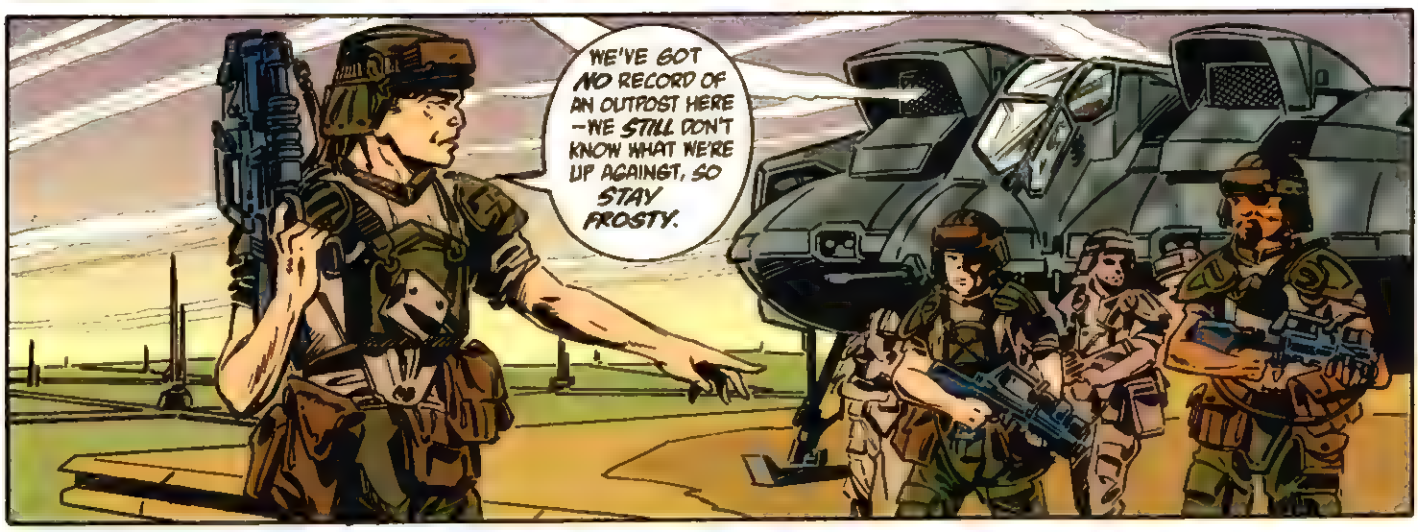
BEECH. YOU'LL STAY ABOARD FOR MAINTENANCE DUTY.
VASQUEZ. YOU'RE WITH NYLAND.
WHAT? YOU CAN'T DO THAT!
IT'S DONE. MOVE IT, MARINES.
THAT WAS COMPLETELY UNNECESSARY.
SHE FROZE IN THE FIELD. SHE DOESN'T BELONG ON RECON.
NEITHER DO YOU. THE COMMANDING OFFICER'S PLACE IS ON THAT ESCORT SHIP--RECON SHOULD BE MINE.
I DISAGREE. DISMISSED, SERGEANT.
THAT'S BRACKEN'S WORLD?
BLUE SKIES, TROPICAL BREEZES ...YOU WOULDN'T LIKE IT, BEECH.
HEY, BEECH! THERE'S SOME PETROLEUM JELLY IN HANGAR FIVE IN CASE YOU GET LONELY.
APPRECIATE THE THOUGHT...


BUT THIS JOLLY'LL DO ME JUST FINE.


LATER...
UHHH, YOU MIGHT WANNA UPDATE THAT GEO-PROFILE, LIEUTENANT, SIR.

THAT'S ALPHATECH HARDWARE...
GET US DOWN PRIVATE.
01
MARYLAND




WE'VE GOT NO RECORD OF AN OUTPOST HERE –WE STILL DON'T KNOW WHAT WE'RE UP AGAINST, SO STAY FROSTY.

WHAT IS ALL THAT?
LOOKS LIKE KELP.
CHRIST.

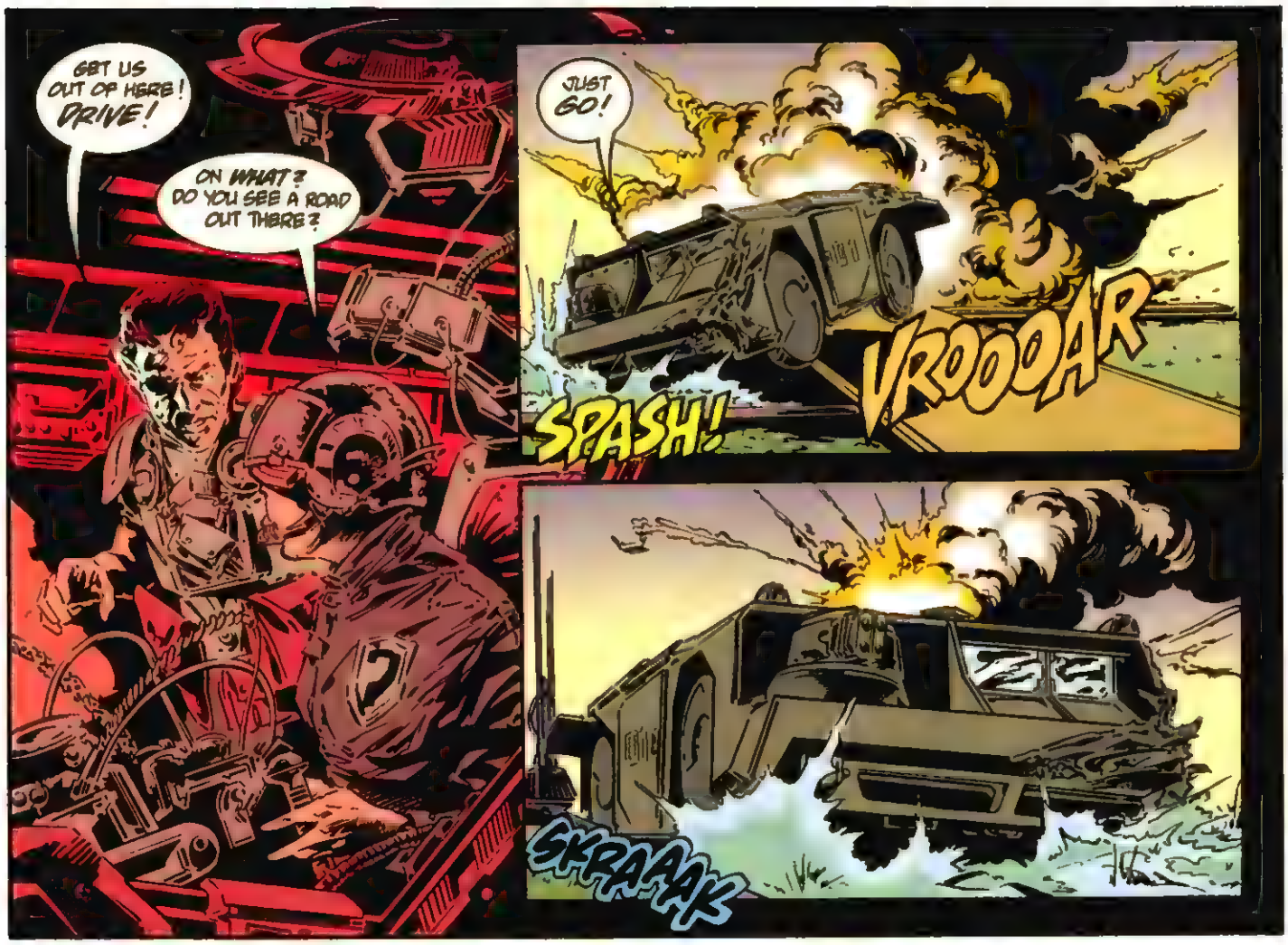
"BLUE SKIES," MY BUM...
IT LOOKS DESERTED, BUT SOMEBODY'S BEEN HERE RECENTLY. SURROUND THE STATION AND ALERT ME IF THEY COME BACK.
101

ICMC64372: ALPHATEC SECTOR BASE.
STAND BY FOR TRANSMISSION.
IT'S ABOUT GODDAMN TIME.
CONGRATU-- YOU'Z! CEASE TRANSMISSION!
OH MY GOD!
WHAT IS IT? REPORT!
BUDDA BUDDA
BUDDA BUDDA
MORE OF THOSE BUG MEN! WE'RE SURROUNDED!
EH?
FALL BACK! NOW! GET IN HERE!
BUDDA BUDDA
BUDDA BUDDA
JEEZ-US! UGLY BASTARDS ARE ALL OVER THE PLACE!

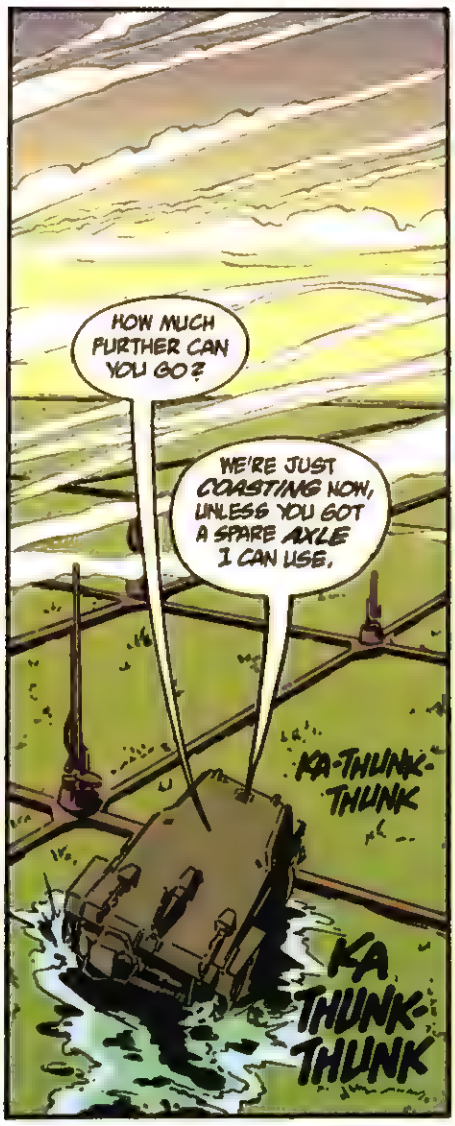
THEY'RE ON THE ROOF! SOMEONE FIND OUT IF THIS PLACE HAS STORM-SHIELDS!
I'M ON IT...
GET IT TOGETHER, MARINE!
INSIDE! LET'S GO! LET'S GO!
KRUSH
HEATHENS! YOU WILL ALL DIE!
BLAST
BLA
NGAAAAH!
KSH
KSH
KSH
KSH
BUDDA BUDDA
HRAAGGG!

MARYLAND! GET US THE HELL OUT OF HERE!
BRAAP
BRAAP
GET AWAY FROM THE DOOR! NOW!
BUDDA
BUDDA BUDDA
ROGER. WATCH THE NORTH WALL... I'M COMIN' IN!
KRUUUUUUMMMMM
WHUNK

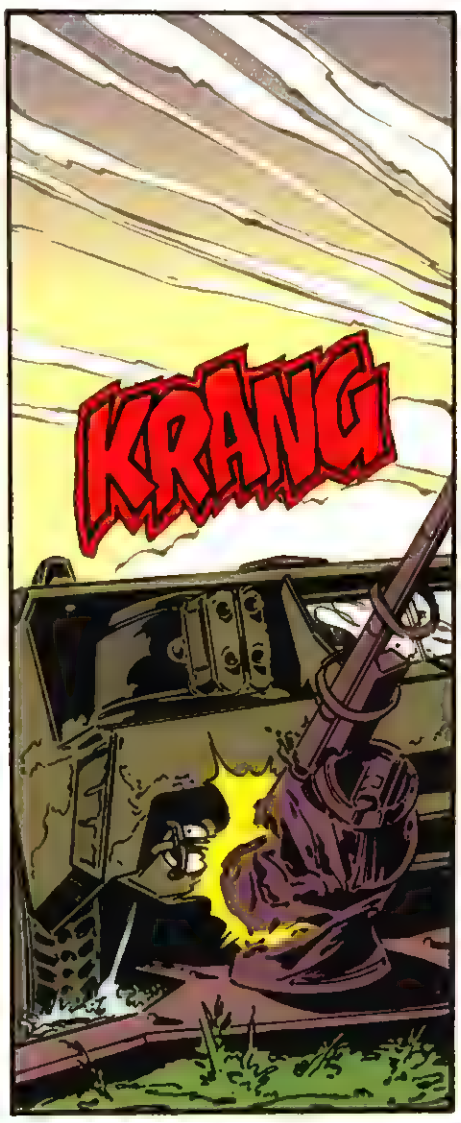
KRRAANNGG
HOP IN, BOYS!
NICE DRIVING.
BUDDA BUDDA
INSIDE! MOVE IT, MARINES!
MARYLAND! GET US BACK TO THE DROPSHIP!
IN A FLASH...
SKREECH
BA
WHOOOM!
... LEUTENANT...


GET US OUT OF HERE! DRIVE!
ON WHAT? DO YOU SEE A ROAD OUT THERE?
JUST GO!
VROOOAR
SPASH!
SKRAAAK

JESUS!
YEE-HAW! RIDE 'EM, MARYLAND!
ANYONE MIND IF I PUKE?
YOU'RE KIDDING, RIGHT?
SSKRUNCH
KA-THUNK


HOW MUCH FURTHER CAN YOU GO?
WE'RE JUST COASTING NOW, UNLESS YOU GOT A SPARE AXLE I CAN USE.
KA-THUNK-THUNK
KA THUNK-THUNK

CAN YOU CONTACT NYLAND'S DROPSHIP?
NOT AT THIS RANGE.
SHE'S HALFWAY AROUND THE PLANET, AND THIS FOG IS FULL OF TOXIC HEAVY METALS.


KRANG

END OF THE LINE. LET'S MOVE OUT.
I SAW THIS IN A MOVIE ONCE...IT DIDN'T END WELL.
ALL RIGHT. WE'RE GOING TO BE HERE AWHILE, SO I WANT THIS AREA SECURED.
CARRANO, YOU'VE GOT POINT.

UGH. I SWEAR I'M NEVER EATING KELP AGAIN.
YOU EAT KELP?
AT LEAST WE CAN WALK ON IT...THE NETTING UNDERNEATH IS FAIRLY STRONG.
"I WANT THIS AREA SECURED." FROM WHAT? FISH?
SKREEEEEE!

PADDY
SPLOOOSH
CARRANO?
WHAT... WHAT WAS THAT?
FALL BACK! FALL BACK! MOVE IT!
FALL BACK TO WHAT?
JESUS! CHECK YOUR TARGETS! GET BACK TO THE APC... NOW!
SKREE
MY LEG!
BUDDA BUDDA

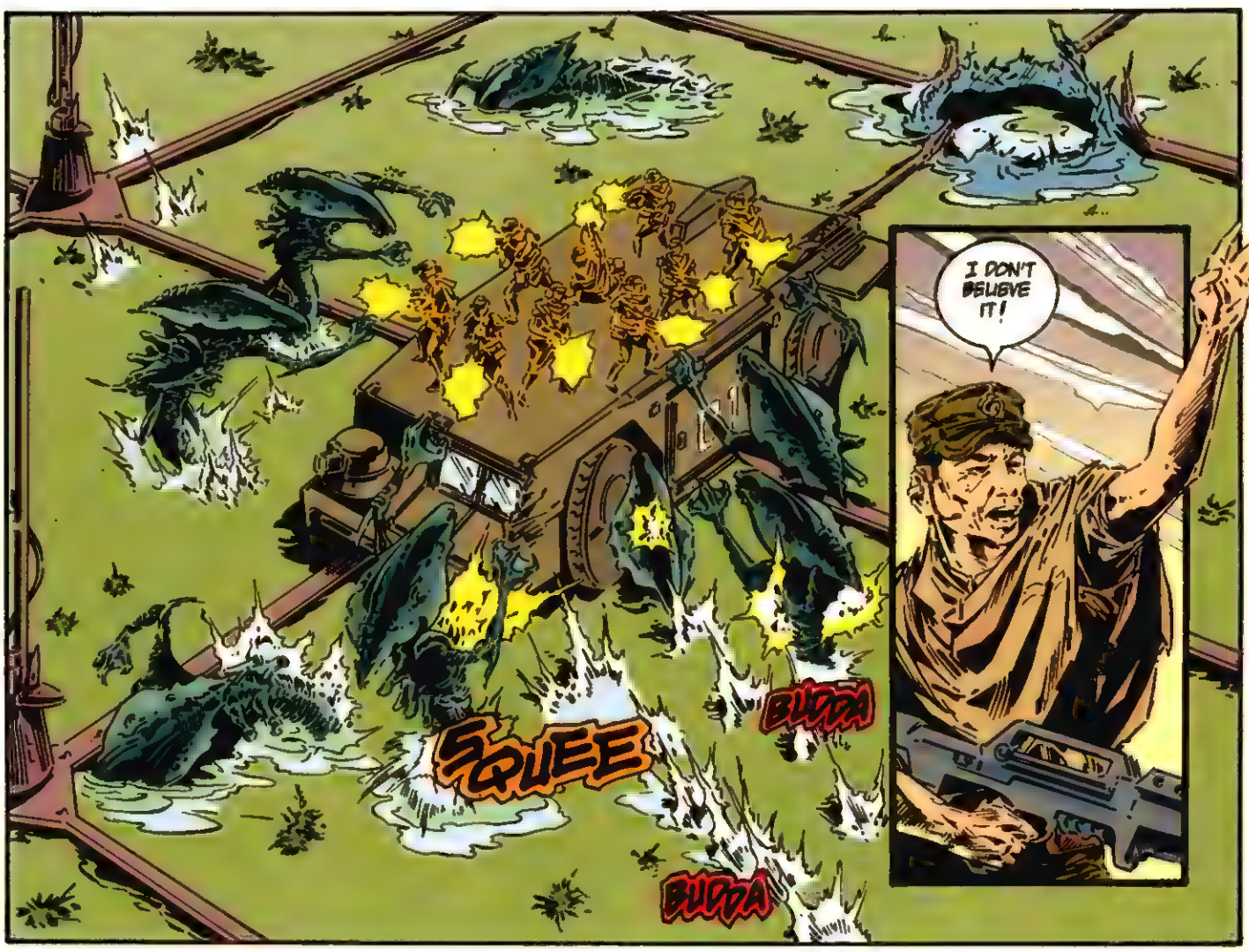
MY LEG...
SKREEEEEE
BUDDA
HANG TOUGH, ROSEMAS!
BUDDA
BUDDA
BEHIND YOU!
WHAT THE HELL ARE THOSE THINGS?!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING, LIEUTENANT?
BEEP
EVERYBODY ON TOP! I'LL BE RIGHT BACK!
JUST SIT TIGHT AND KEEP ME COVERED!
BEEP
BEEP
HGGRAAAA
OH... SHIT.

HRAAAA
BEE-KLIK
BAAWHOOOOM
FSSSSHHHH
RAKO! THANK YOU!
NO WORRIES, LIEUTENANT.
COURSE, I'LL BE EXPECTING A PROMOTION OUTTA THIS.
ALL RIGHT. IF THOSE THINGS AVOID FIRE AS MUCH AS OTHER BUGS, THAT EXPLOSION SHOULD GIVE US A FEW MINUTES.

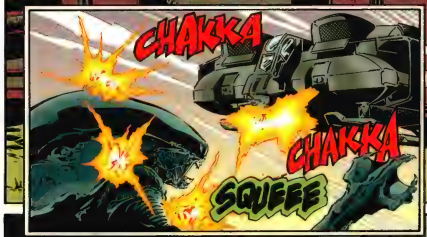
HERE'S THE SITUATION. THE APC'S NOT GOING ANYWHERE AND WALKING'S OUT OF THE QUESTION. ALL WE CAN DO IS WAIT.
WE'RE SCHEDULED TO RENDEZVOUS WITH NYLAND IN AN HOUR. I GIVE HER FIFTEEN MINUTES TO START MISSING US AND ANOTHER FIFTEEN TO GET OUT HERE.
THAT'S NINETY MINUTES, MARINES. ALL WE GOTTA DO IS STAY ALIVE.
THAT'S YOUR PLAN? SIT HERE WAITING TO GET PICKED OFF LIKE CARRANO?
IF YOU'VE GOT A BETTER ONE, LET'S HEAR IT.
WE'RE NOT GOING TO MAKE IT, ARE WE?
WE'LL FIND OUT SOON ENOUGH.

MARINES! OVER THE SIDE!
SQUEEEE
BUDDA
BUDDA
THIS IS IT, MARINES!
BUDDA
BUDDA
SQUEE
STAY DOWN, ROSEMAS. I GOT YA COVERED!
BUDDA
BRAAP
AAAAAH!

JESUS!
CIRCLE AROUND! SHOULDER TO SHOULDER!
BRAAAP
SQUEE
THEY'RE CLOSING IN! WE'RE NOT GOIN' TA MAKE IT!
KIND OF A RUSH, ISN'T IT?


I DON'T BELIEVE IT!
SQUEE
BUDDA
BUDDA

YEAH!
BUDDA
IT'S THE GODDAMN CAVALRY!
BUDDA
CHAKKA
CHAKKA
CHAKKA
SQUEEE

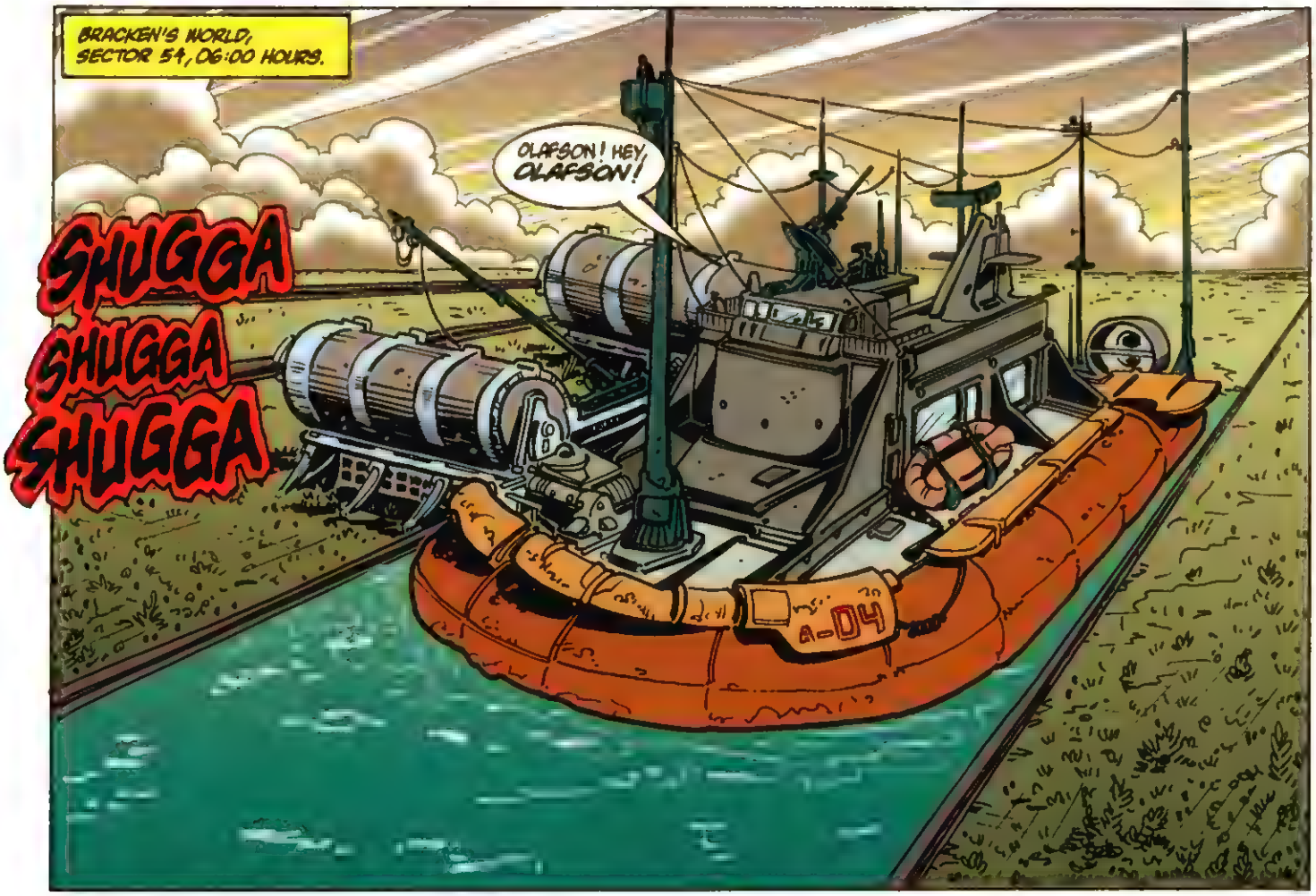

CHAKKA
CHAKKA
SQUEEE

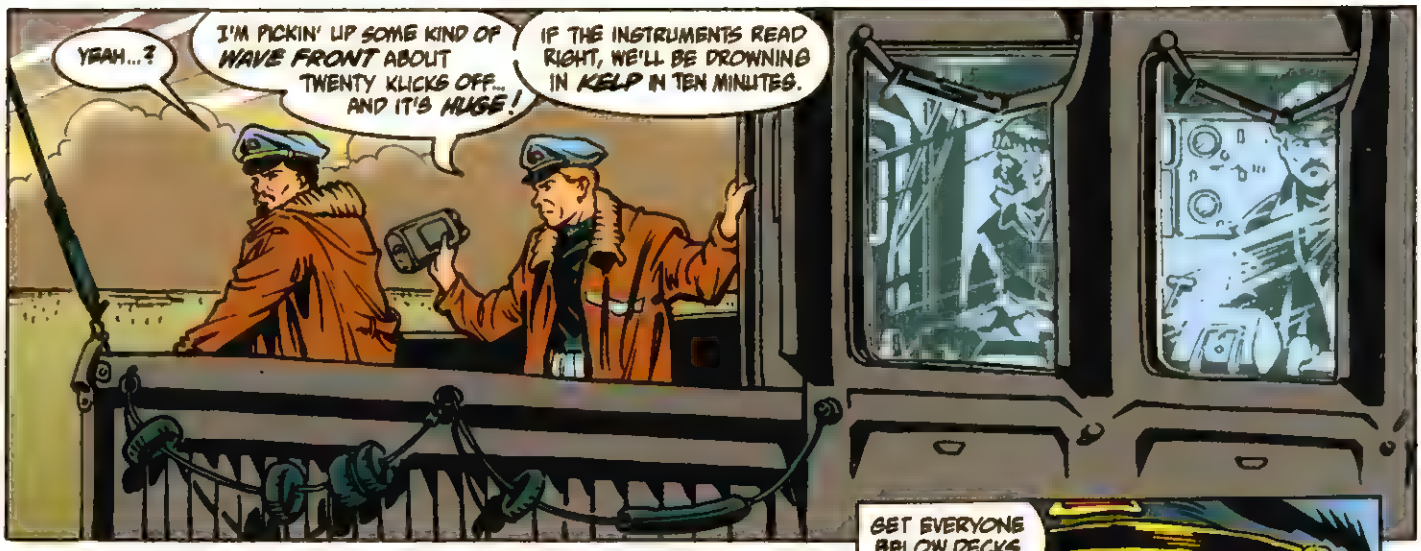
INSIDE! LET'S GO!
DON'T HAVE TO TELL ME TWICE.
EVERYONE'S IN! DUST OFF!

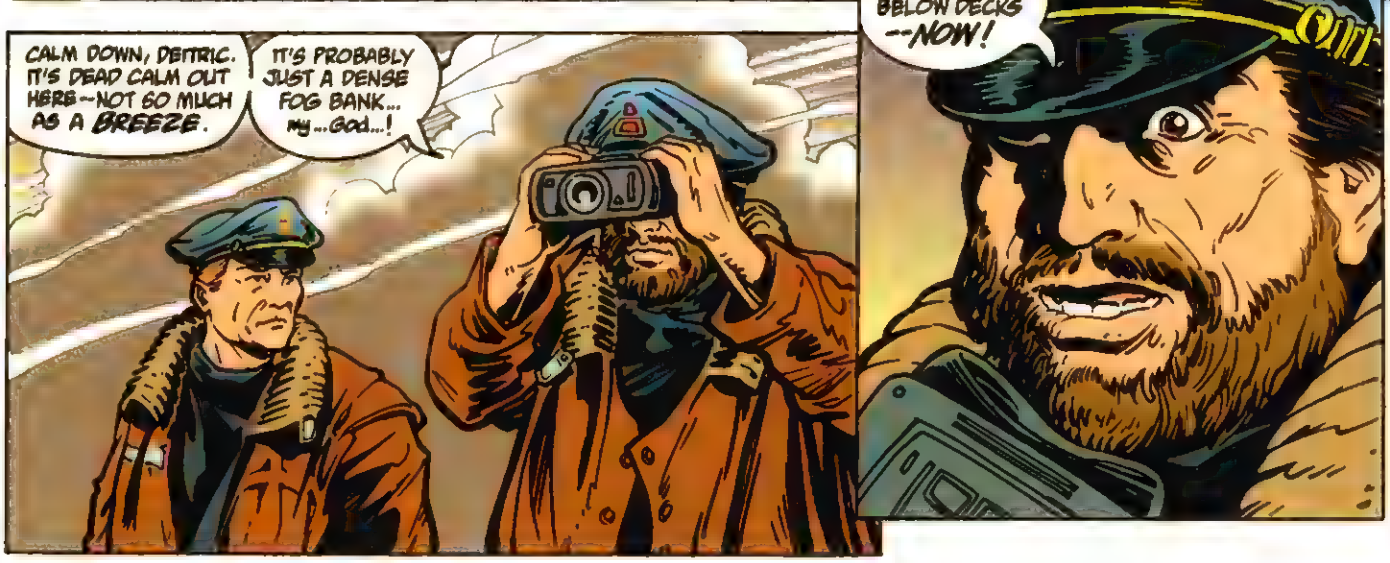
WE NEARE TOAST! YOU GUYS SAVED OUR ASSES!

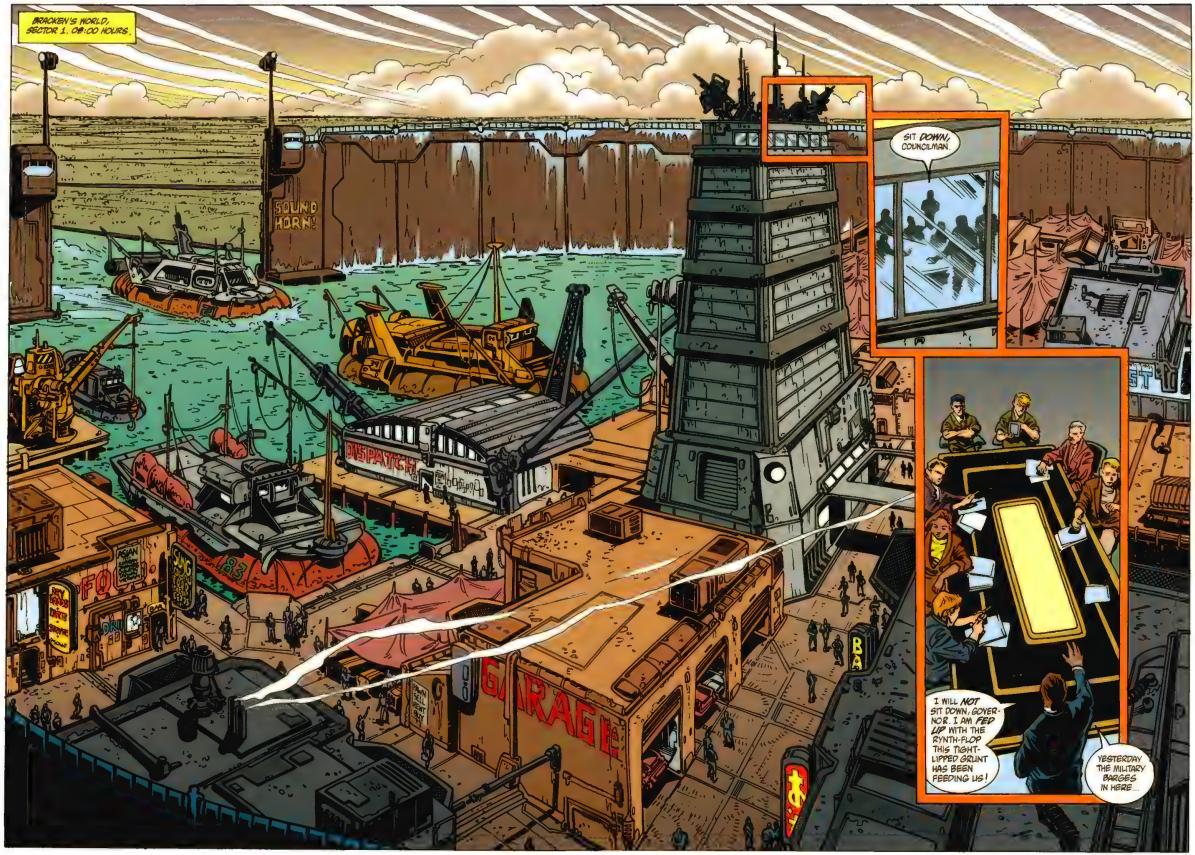
THAT SHOULD MAKE US EVEN, QUE NO?

I NEED A CIGARETTE.
I HEARD THAT.
VASQUEZ? SO YOU CAN PULL A TRIGGER.
EAT ME, CVERCKO.
I CAME AS SOON AS I LOST CONTACT WITH THE DROPSHIP. WERE YOU ABLE TO CONTACT SECTOR HQ?
UH, NO.
NO, WE WERE AMBUSHED BY MORE OF THOSE "BUG-MEN" BEFORE I COULD LINK UP.
FORGET ABOUT HQ FOR NOW. WE'RE ON OUR OWN.

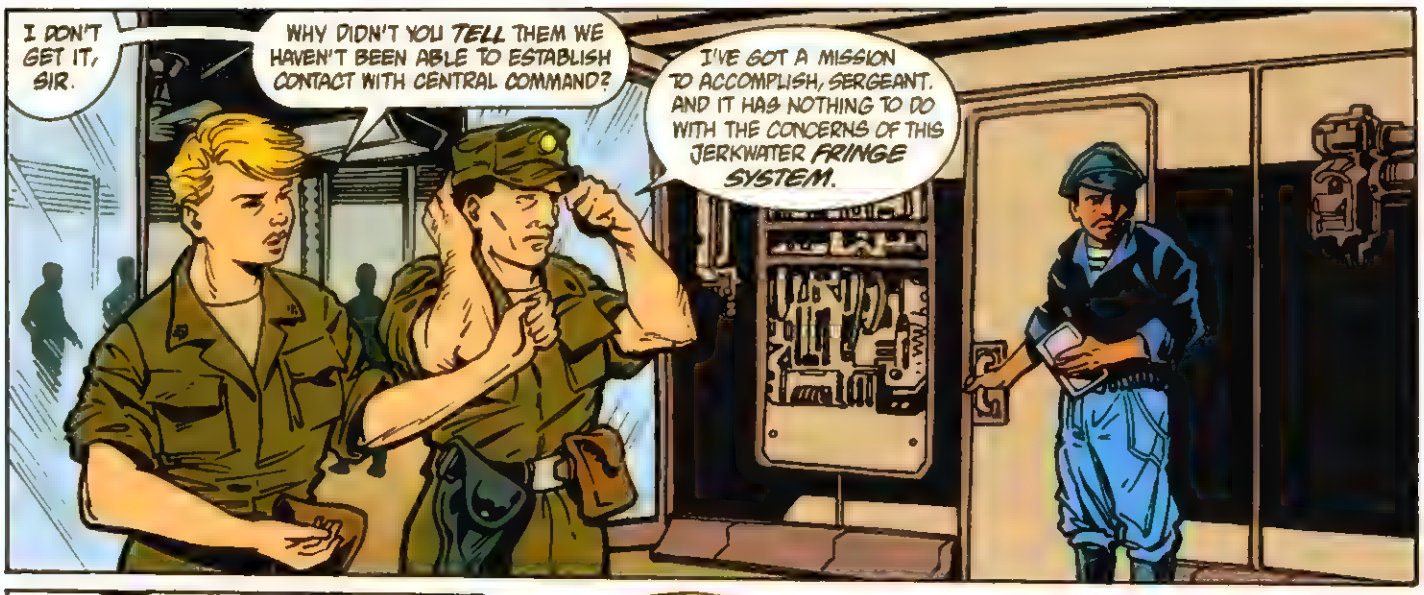

BRACKEN'S WORLD, SECTOR 54, 06:00 HOURS.
SHUGGA SHUGGA SHUGGA
OLAFSON! HEY, OLAFSON!
A-04


YEAH...?
I'M PICKIN' UP SOME KIND OF WAVE FRONT ABOUT TWENTY KLICKS OFF... AND IT'S HUGE!
IF THE INSTRUMENTS READ RIGHT, WE'LL BE DROWNING IN KELP IN TEN MINUTES.


CALM DOWN, DEITRIC. IT'S DEAD CALM OUT HERE--NOT SO MUCH AS A BREEZE.
IT'S PROBABLY JUST A DENSE FOG BANK... my...God...!
GET EVERYONE BELOW DECKS --NOW!


BROKEN'S WORLD, SECTOR 1. 08:00 HOURS.
SOUND HORN!
DISPATCH
GARAGE
SIT DOWN, COUNCILMAN.
I WILL NOT SIT DOWN, GOVERNOR. I AM FED UP WITH THE RYNTH-FLOP THIS TIGHT-LIPPED SQUINT HAS BEEN FEEDING US!
YESTERDAY THE MILITARY BARGES IN HERE...

...DUMPING A PAIR OF ALPHA-TECH PRIMA DONNAS, WOUNDED PERSONNEL, AND SOME FREAKISH ZEALOT IN OUR MED-BAY WITHOUT EXPLANATION!
NOW THEY TELL US THEY ENCOUNTERED XENOMORPHS IN OUR KELP BEDS?!
WE MAY BE A SMALL COLONY AND LIGHT YEARS AWAY FROM THE CORE SYSTEMS, BUT WE HAVE A RIGHT TO KNOW WHAT'S GOING ON!
UNDERSTOOD, COUNCILMAN, BUT WE'VE GIVEN YOU ALL THE INFORMATION WE HAVE...
IF THERE IS AN ALIEN INFESTATION ON THIS PLANET--
--I DEMAND TO KNOW WHAT YOU'RE GOING TO DO ABOUT IT!
PLEASE UNDERSTAND. WE CANNOT ACT WITHOUT ORDERS, AND WE'VE BEEN UNABLE TO ESTABLISH COMM--
THANK YOU, SERGEANT. THAT'S ENOUGH.
GENTLEMEN, YOUR SITUATION HAS BEEN EVALUATED AND CENTRAL COMMAND HAS BEEN INFORMED. THIS CONCLUDES OUR MEETING.
WHAT?! THIS IS INTOLERABLE!
UH...HERE ARE THE DETAILS ON DISK. EXCUSE ME...

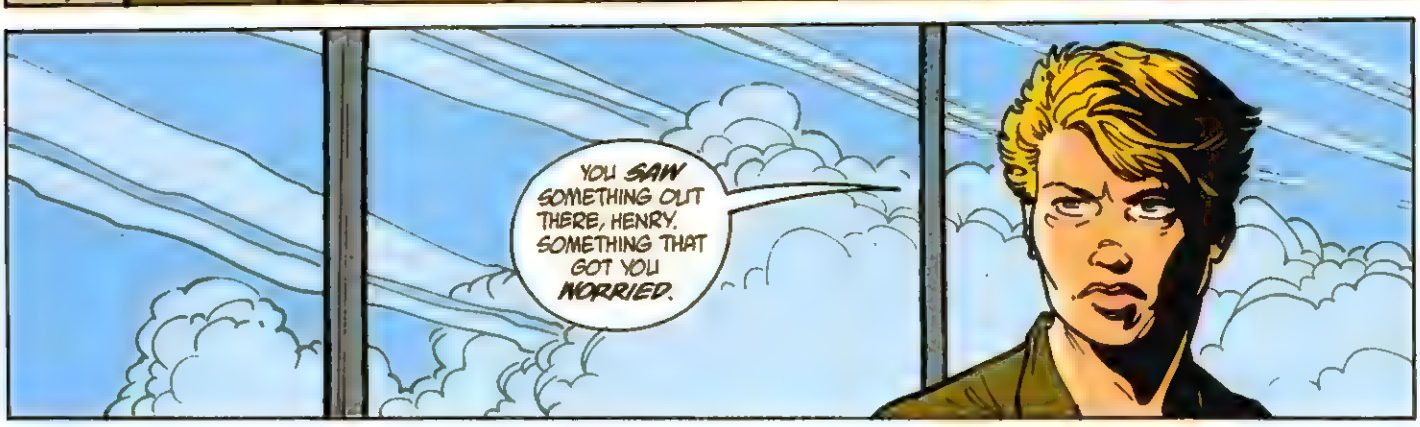

I DON'T GET IT, SIR.
WHY DIDN'T YOU TELL THEM WE HAVEN'T BEEN ABLE TO ESTABLISH CONTACT WITH CENTRAL COMMAND?
I'VE GOT A MISSION TO ACCOMPLISH, SERGEANT. AND IT HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH THE CONCERNS OF THIS JERKWATER FRINGE SYSTEM.

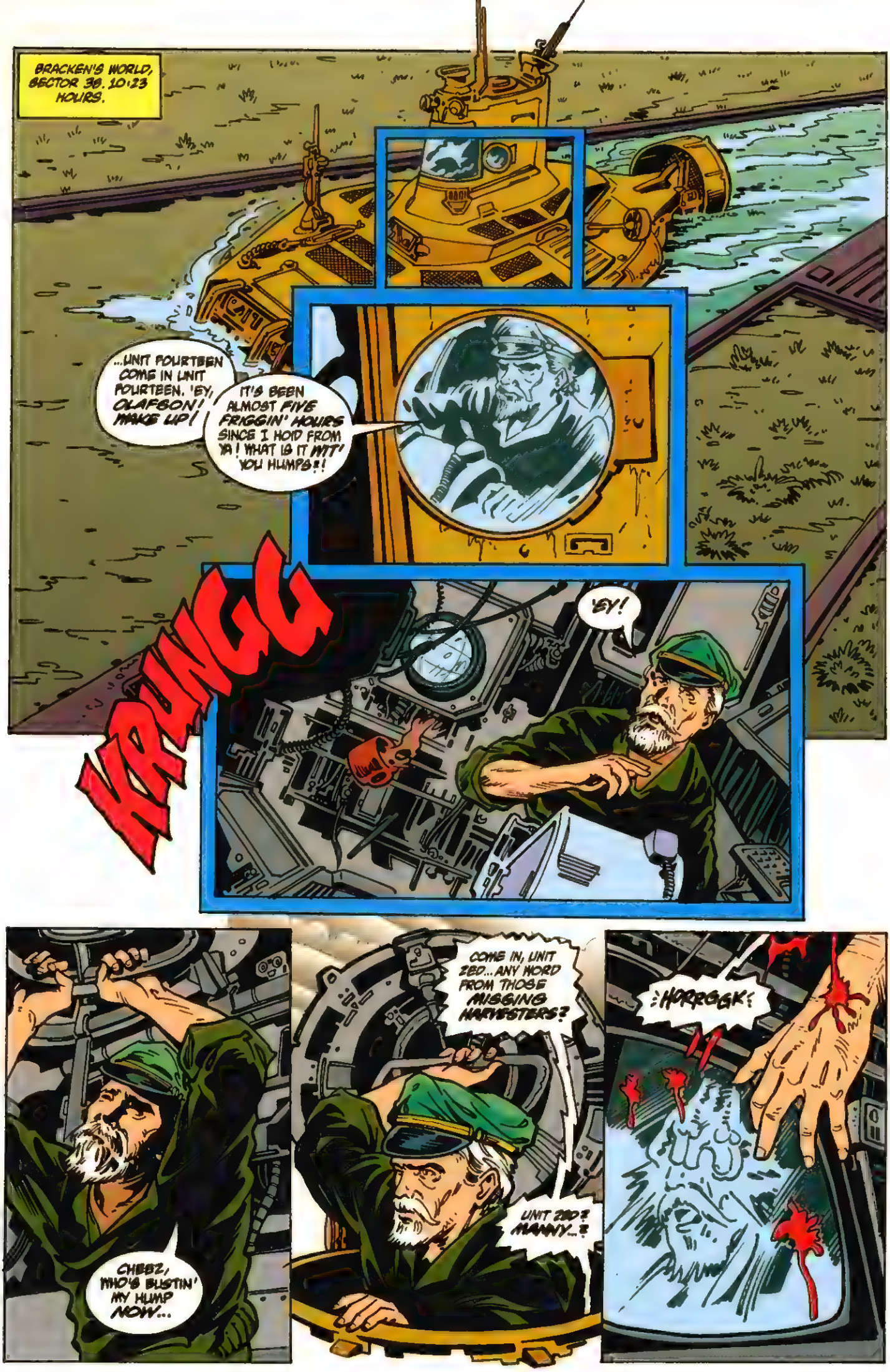
YOU'RE DODGING MY QUESTION.
LOOK...THEY DON'T NEED ALL THE FACTS. AND FRANKLY, NEITHER DO YOU.

WHAT?

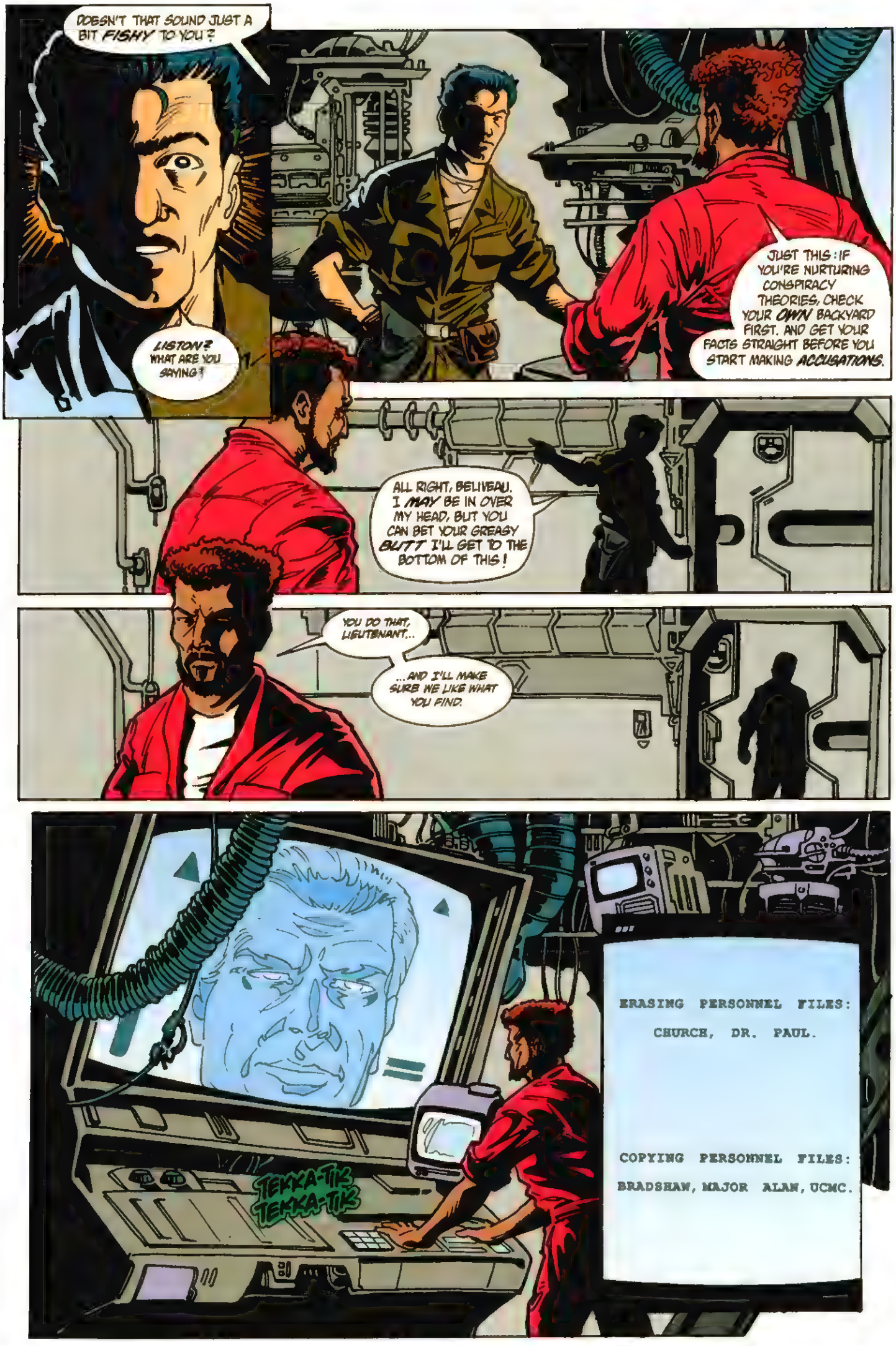
WHAT'S GOTTEN INTO YOU? EVER SINCE THAT FIREFIGHT YESTERDAY YOU'VE BEEN PLAYING IT VERY CLOSE...
ENOUGH, SERGEANT.

WE'LL REPORT FOR DUTY AT THE COMMUNICATIONS ARRAY AS SCHEDULED. HAVE THE TROOPS READY FOR DEBRIEFING BY 12:00 HOURS. DISMISSED.


YOU SAW SOMETHING OUT THERE, HENRY. SOMETHING THAT GOT YOU WORRIED.


BRACKEN'S WORLD, SECTOR 39. 10:23 HOURS.
...UNIT FOURTEEN COME IN UNIT FOURTEEN. 'EY, OLAFSON! WAKE UP!
IT'S BEEN ALMOST FIVE FRIGGIN' HOURS SINCE I HOID FROM YA! WHAT IS IT WIT' YOU HUMPS?!
KRUNGG
'EY!
CHEEZ, WHO'S BUSTIN' MY HUMP NOW...
COME IN, UNIT ZED... ANY WORD FROM THOSE MISSING HARVESTERS?
UNIT ZED? MANNY...?
:HORRGGK:

BRACKEN'S WORLD, SECTOR 1, 10:50 HOURS.
TIKKA-TEK
PING
COME IN.
BELIVEAU. I WANT TO TALK TO YOU.
AH, LIEUTENANT HENRY. I'M A LITTLE BUSY RIGHT NOW...
SHUT UP AND LISTEN. I SHOWED UP AT AN ALPHATECH STATION YESTERDAY AND GOT AMBUSHED BY BUG-MEN WIELDING ALPHATECH WEAPONS!
NOW, I WANT SOME ANSWERS! HOW DID THEY GET THAT EQUIPMENT? WHAT'S ALPHATECH'S INVOLVEMENT IN ALL THIS?
HOW SHOULD I KNOW? I'M JUST A GLORIFIED ACCOUNTANT.
BULL. I GREW UP WITH POWER-BROKERS, SO I KNOW ONE WHEN I SEE ONE. YOU'RE A MAJOR PLAYER, BELIVEAU.
I'M SUPPOSED TO BELIEVE ALPHATECH SENT YOU OUT ON ERRAND DUTY? FORGET IT.
SOUNDS IMPLAUSIBLE?
HENRY
WHAT ABOUT THE MILITARY COMMISSIONING A MULTI-MILLION DOLLAR PROTOTYPE SYNTHETIC TO HOIST GIRDERS FOR A YEAR?


DOESN'T THAT SOUND JUST A BIT FISHY TO YOU?
LISTON? WHAT ARE YOU SAYING?
JUST THIS: IF YOU'RE NURTURING CONSPIRACY THEORIES, CHECK YOUR OWN BACKYARD FIRST. AND GET YOUR FACTS STRAIGHT BEFORE YOU START MAKING ACCUSATIONS.
ALL RIGHT, BELIVEAU. I MAY BE IN OVER MY HEAD, BUT YOU CAN BET YOUR GREASY BUTT I'LL GET TO THE BOTTOM OF THIS!
YOU DO THAT, LIEUTENANT...
...AND I'LL MAKE SURE WE LIKE WHAT YOU FIND.
ERASING PERSONNEL FILES:
CHURCH, DR. PAUL.
COPYING PERSONNEL FILES:
BRADSHAW, MAJOR ALAN, UCMC.
TEKKA-TIK
TEKKA-TIK

MEANWHILE...
AAAAHH... GOOD TO THE LAST DROP.
JOY JELLY; TAKE ME HOME!
WARNING! ORBIT DETERIORATING! COMPUTER MALFUNCTION!
WHOA! GOOD THING I'M JUICED AND ON MY TOES!
COURSE CORRECTED. MAINTAIN, PLEASE.
DAMN, BLEW MY RIDE! COME BACK SOON, MR. BUG MAN...
YOUR BUDDY BEECH IS HIGH AND DRY!

BRACKEN'S WORLD, SECTOR 1, 11:20 HOURS.
THESE LITTLE BEAUTIES CAN PUT YOU IN ORBIT, SOLDIER!
NO BIGGER THAN A PEA, BUT WIRED TO A REMOTE DETONATOR AND PACKED FULL OF C-19!
TO TRIGGER ONE, ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS SET A RANGE FOR THE REMOTE DETONATOR...
AND WHEN THE BOMB IS MOVED OUTSIDE THAT RANGE--BLAM! NICE BIG HOLE!
ARE THE CASINGS NON-TOXIC?
UH, SURE...ARE YOU PLANNING TO EAT THESE?
JUST PACK THEM UP...
KEEP QUIET ABOUT THIS, I DON'T LIKE GOSSIPY VENDORS.
LIEUTENANT HENRY? WHAT A STROKE OF LUCK! YOUR SERGEANT HAD NO IDEA WHERE YOU WERE.

GOVERNOR!

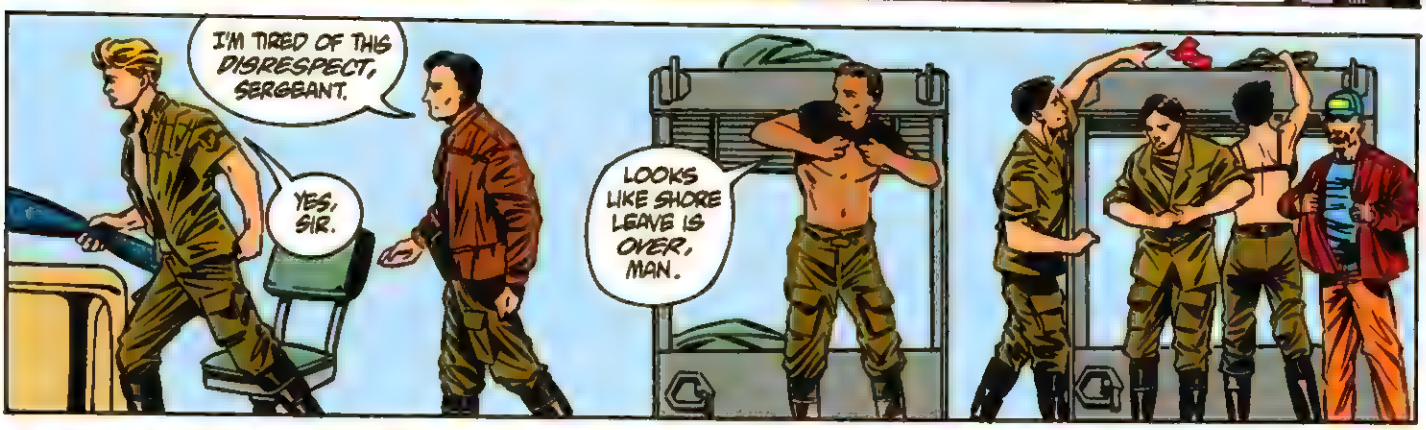
THE LIVES OF THESE PEOPLE ARE AT STAKE! PLEASE RECONSIDER!

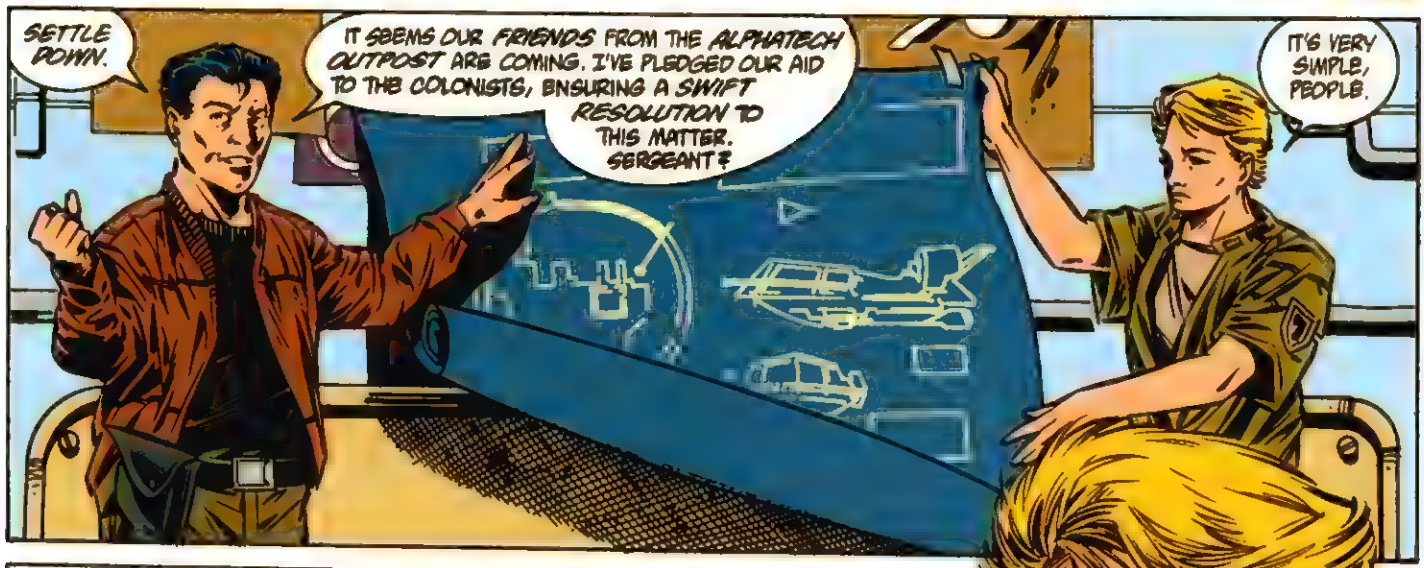
WE'VE LOST CONTACT WITH DOZENS OF HARVEST SHIPS IN OUTLYING AREAS! THE KELP FARMERS ARE PANICKING!

HELP US, LIEUTENANT ...I BEG OF YOU.

YOU HAVE MY HELP UNTIL SUNRISE TOMORROW--AND NOT A MINUTE MORE.

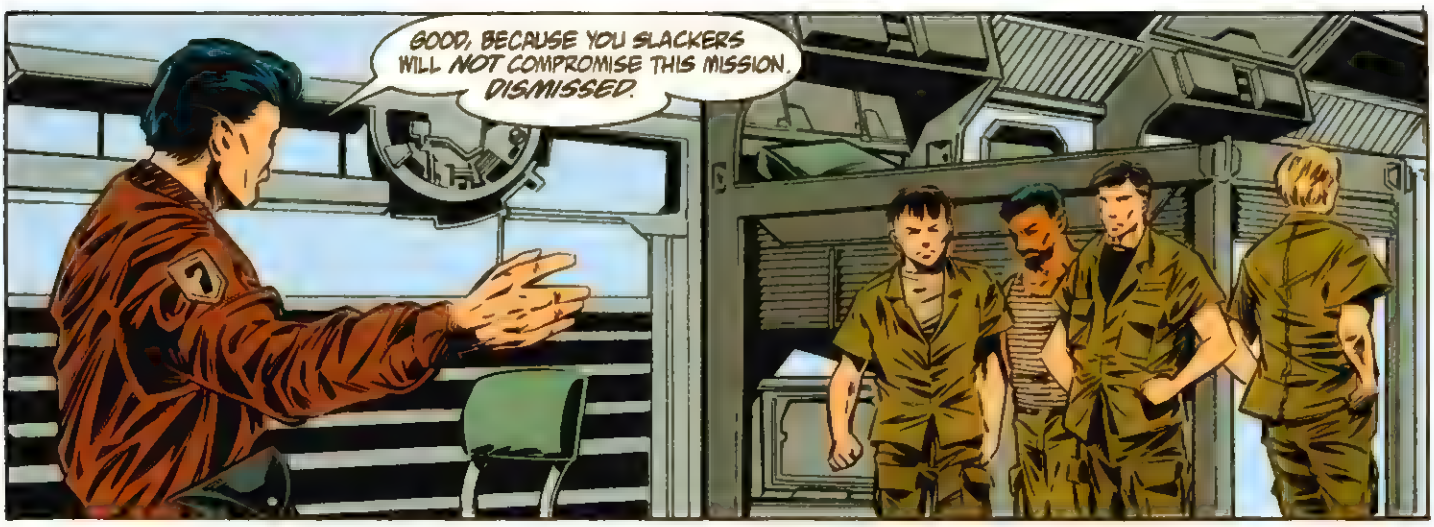
BRACKEN'S WORLD, SECTOR 1, 12:00 HOURS.
HAH! READ 'EM AND WEEP, LEATHERNECK!
OH, MAN...! YOU'RE A LUCKY SONUVABITCH, DINKEL.
CAN'T ANY OF YOU TELL TIME?! IT'S 1200 HOURS AND I WANT YOU AT THE READY--NOW!

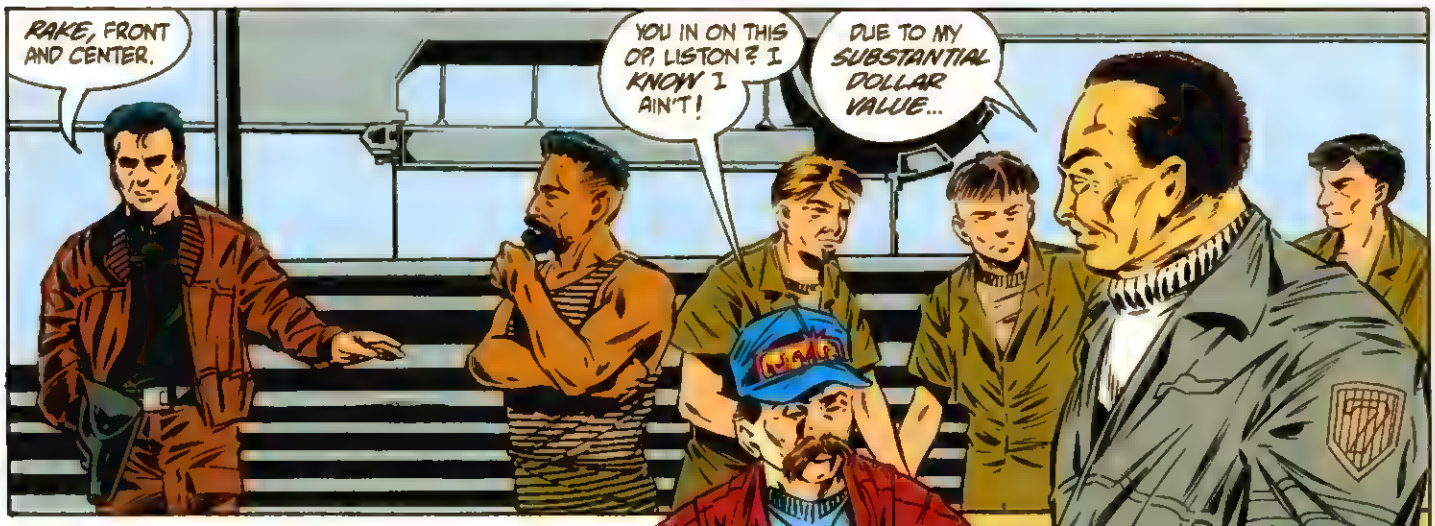

I'M TIRED OF THIS DISRESPECT, SERGEANT.
YES, SIR.
LOOKS LIKE SHORE LEAVE IS OVER, MAN.


SETTLE DOWN.
IT SEEMS OUR FRIENDS FROM THE ALPHATECH OUTPOST ARE COMING. I'VE PLEDGED OUR AID TO THE COLONISTS, ENSURING A SWIFT RESOLUTION TO THIS MATTER. SERGEANT?
IT'S VERY SIMPLE, PEOPLE.

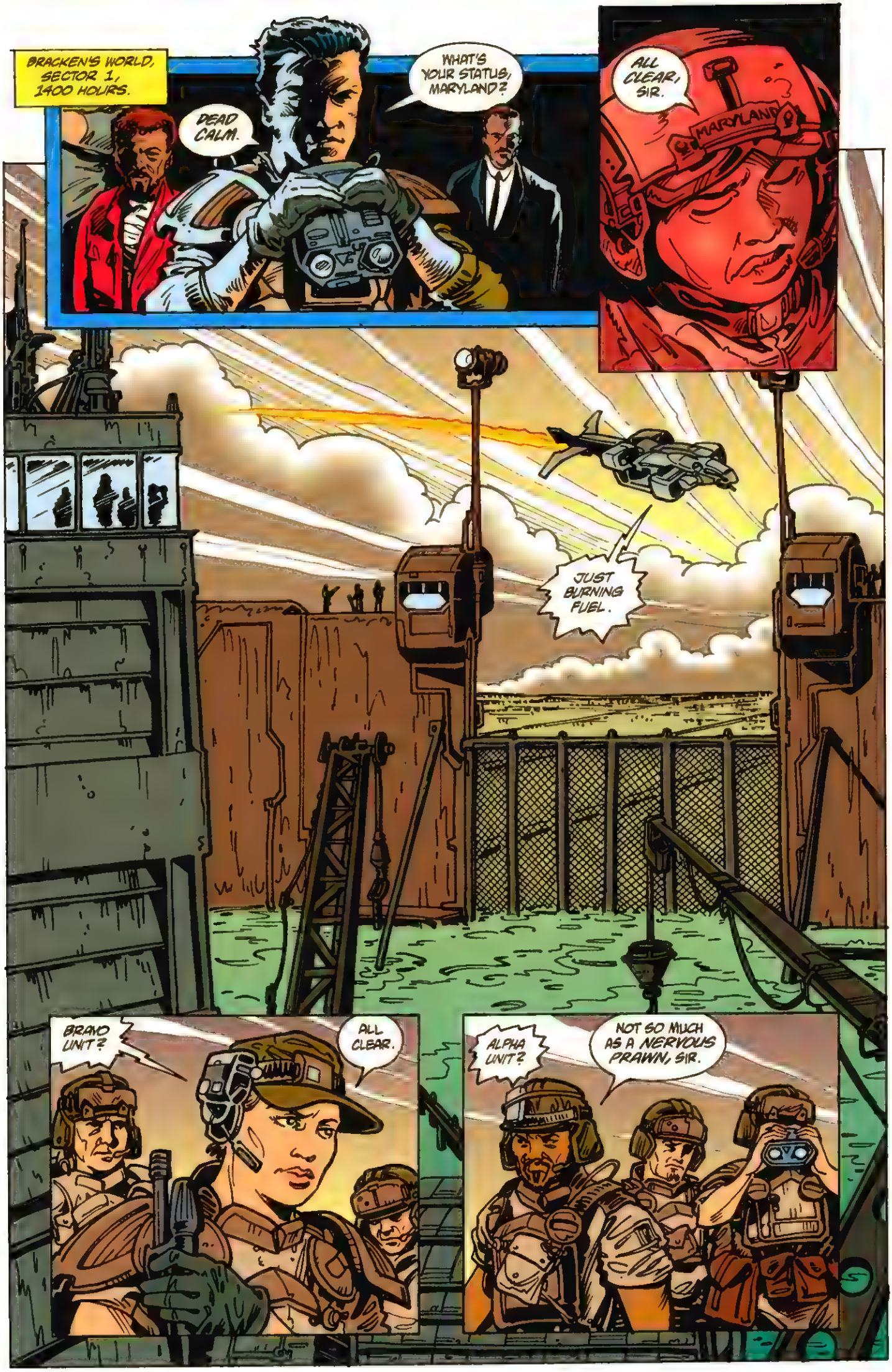
ACCORDING TO THESE BLUEPRINTS, THERE'S ONLY ONE WAY INTO THIS COMPLEX. THE STORM WALL IS REINFORCED POLYCARBON RESIN SUNK INTO SOLID BEDROCK.
THEY CAN'T PUNCH THROUGH, SO THEY'LL HAVE TO RUSH THE SEA GATE.

TO MAKE IT SIMPLE, WE POST A UNIT IN THE MAIN ACCESS CHANNEL AND SHUT THE SEA GATE.
WHEN THE ENEMY COMES INTO VIEW, THAT UNIT BEGINS FIRING AND FALLS BACK TO THE GATE.
THEN WE OPEN THE GATE, GIVING THE ENEMY AN EASY TARGET. THAT'S WHEN WE PIN THEM DOWN WITH FIRE FROM UNITS POSTED ON THE WALL, AND A DROPSHIP WAITING BEHIND THE GATE.
SCREW THAT! WHY DON'T WE JUST BLOW THIS MUDBALL AND LET THE LOCALS--
BECAUSE I GAVE YOU ORDERS, SOLDIER, AND YOU WILL FOLLOW THEM TO THE LETTER! IF ANYONE--ANYONE TRIES TO BOLT FROM THIS OP, THEY WILL BE SHOT! UNDERSTOOD?
I'M HEARIN' YA...


GOOD, BECAUSE YOU SLACKERS WILL NOT COMPROMISE THIS MISSION. DISMISSED.


RAKE, FRONT AND CENTER.
YOU IN ON THIS OP, LISTON? I KNOW I AIN'T!
DUE TO MY SUBSTANTIAL DOLLAR VALUE...

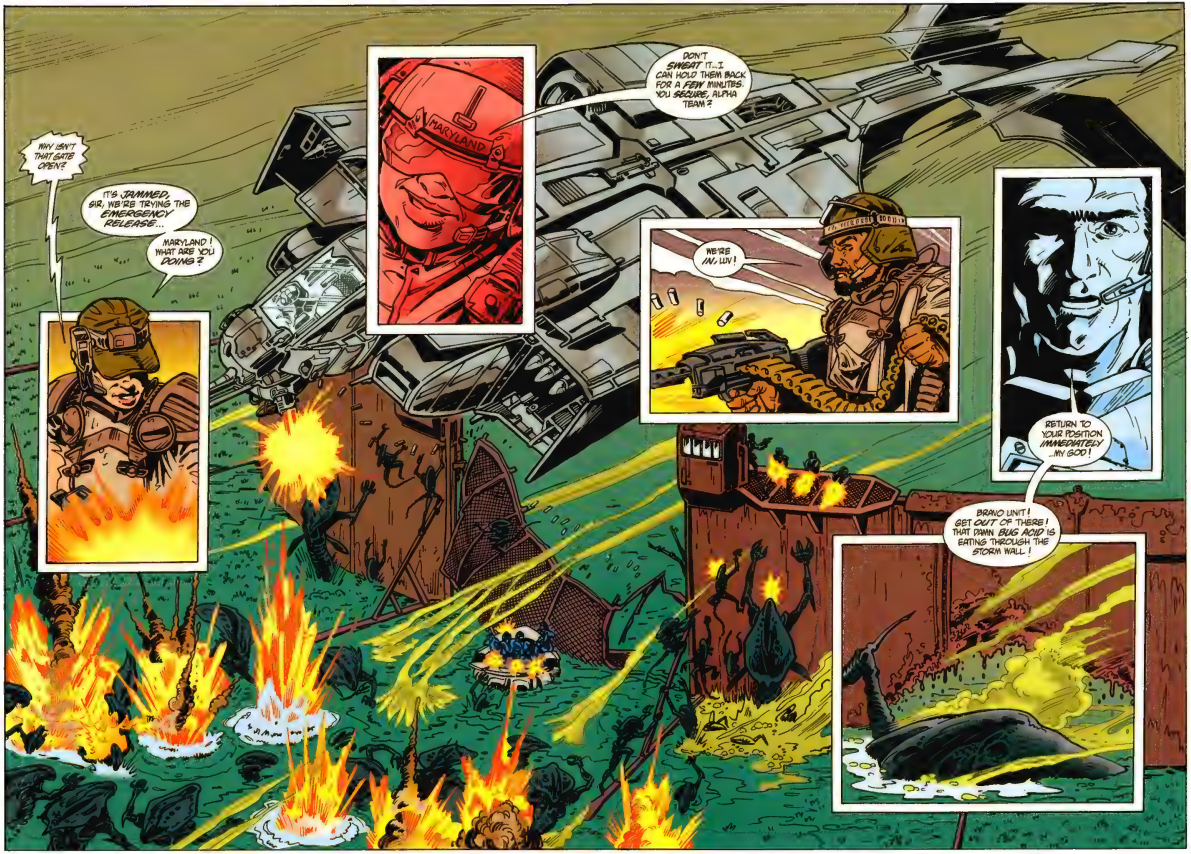
I'VE HAD IT WITH THAT MILLION-DOLLAR WALLFLOWER.
ACCORDING TO YOUR FILE, YOU HAVE EXTENSIVE TECH TRAINING. YOU LOOKED PRETTY SHARP BACK AT THE RAILGUN SO DON'T DENY IT.
AFTER THE OP, I WANT YOU TO JACK INTO LISTON'S HEAD AND MOTIVATE HIM.
I NEED HIM FOR THE MISSION.


BRACKEN'S WORLD, SECTOR 1, 1400 HOURS.
DEAD CALM.
WHAT'S YOUR STATUS, MARYLAND?
ALL CLEAR, SIR.
MARYLAND
JUST BURNING FUEL.
BRAVO UNIT?
ALL CLEAR.
ALPHA UNIT?
NOT SO MUCH AS A NERVOUS PRAWN, SIR.

HANG ON--I'VE GOT A BOGIE TWENTY-EIGHT KLIKS OFF.
280°
ALL UNITS: LOCK AND LOAD! CAN YOU ESTIMATE E.T.A., ALPHA UNIT?
AT PRESENT VELOCITY, THIRTEEN MINUTES.
RECEIVED. ALL UNITS STAND BY.
THEY DON'T LOOK LIKE MUCH FROM HERE.
DON'T BE A WANKER, ROSEY, REMEMBER WHAT HAPPENED TO CARRANO.
DID YOU HAVE TO REMIND ME?

WHA...? DID THE SKIFF JUST MOVE A LITTLE? I WONDER HOW DEEP THIS CHANNEL IS...
HRRRAAAA
YAAAH!
SOME-ONE GRAB CHEN!
ALPHA TEAM! WHAT'S GOING ON OUT THERE?

WE'VE BEEN PLAYED FOR MARAUDERS, SIR! THE BUGS ARE HERE--NOW!!
GET US OUT OF HERE!
YOU HEARD HER, PEOPLE! GET THAT GATE OPEN--PRONTO!
BRAVO TEAM--OPEN FIRE! I WANT THOSE BUGS PINNED DOWN!
NEVER MIND OUR SORRY BEHINDS...
PARDON MY FRANKNESS, SIR, BUT WE COULD USE A LITTLE AIR SUPPORT.
NEGATIVE! THE DROPSHIP MUST PROTECT THE HARBOR!
THE GATE IS THE LAST LINE OF DEFENSE! WE CANNOT ALLOW THE ENEMY THROUGH!

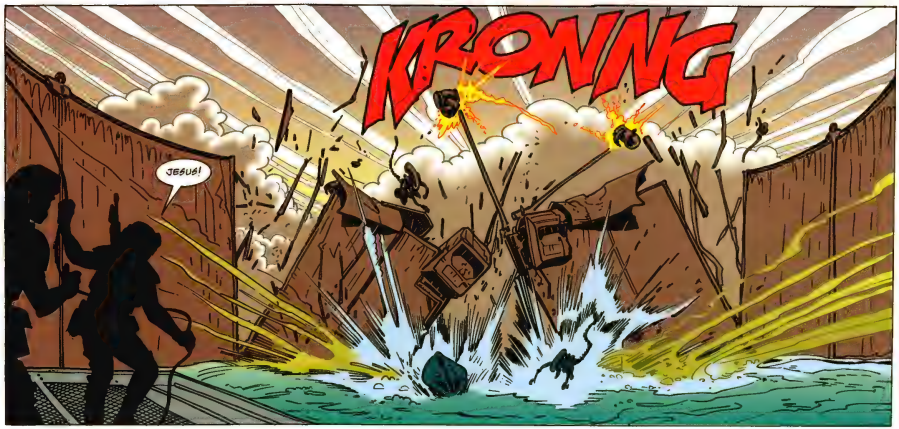

WHY ISN'T THAT GATE OPEN?
IT'S JAMMED, SIR, WE'RE TRYING THE EMERGGANCY RELEASE...
MARYLAND! WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
MARYLAND
DON'T SWEAT IT...I CAN HOLD THEM BACK FOR A FEW MINUTES. YOU SECURE, ALPHA TEAM?
WE'RE IN, LUV!
RETURN TO YOUR POSITION IMMEDIATELY ...MY GOD!
BRAVO UNIT! GET OUT OF THERE! THAT DAMN BUG ACID IS EATING THROUGH THE STORM WALL!

YOU HEARD THE MAN! MOVE IT!
ABOUT TIME HE GAVE A DAMN FOR HIS TROOPS.

SSSSSSSSSSS

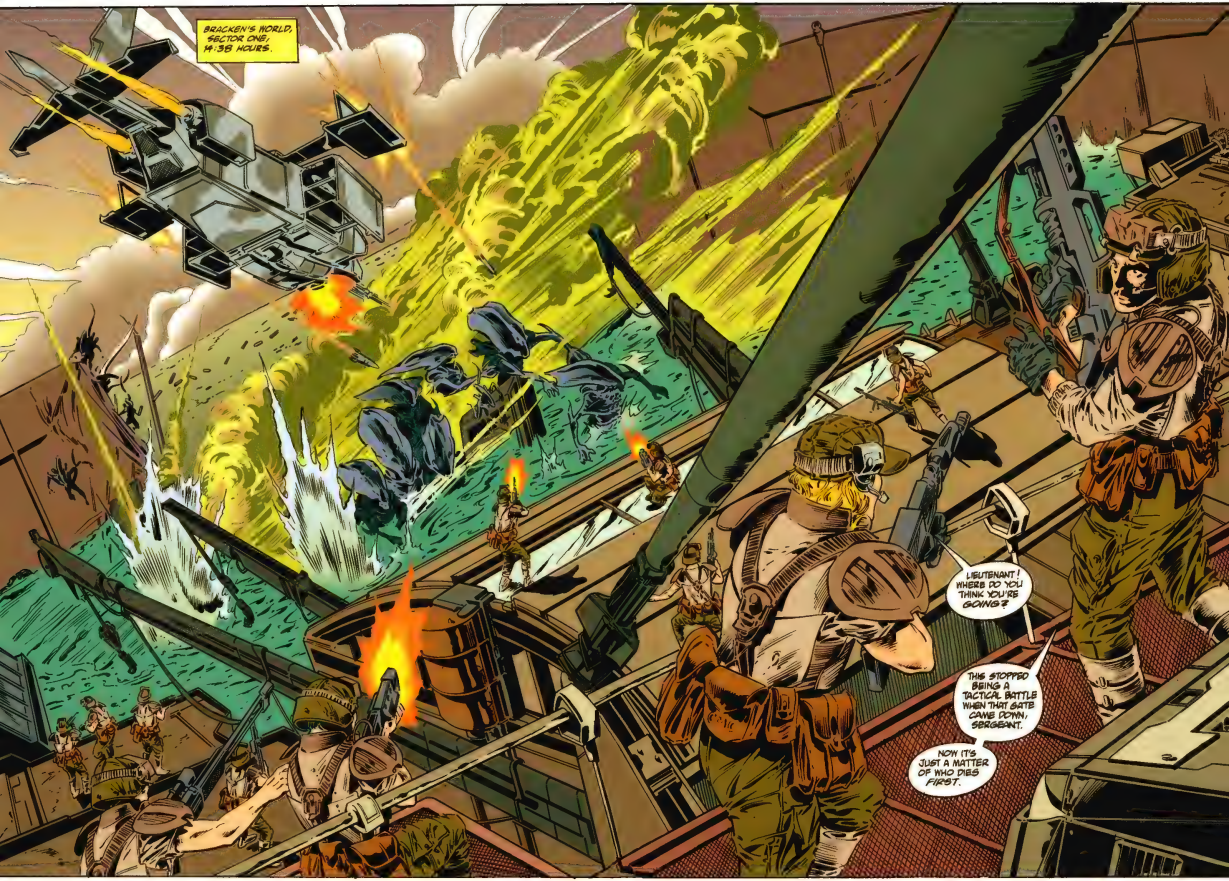
INCOMING!
QUIT JERKIN' AROUND!

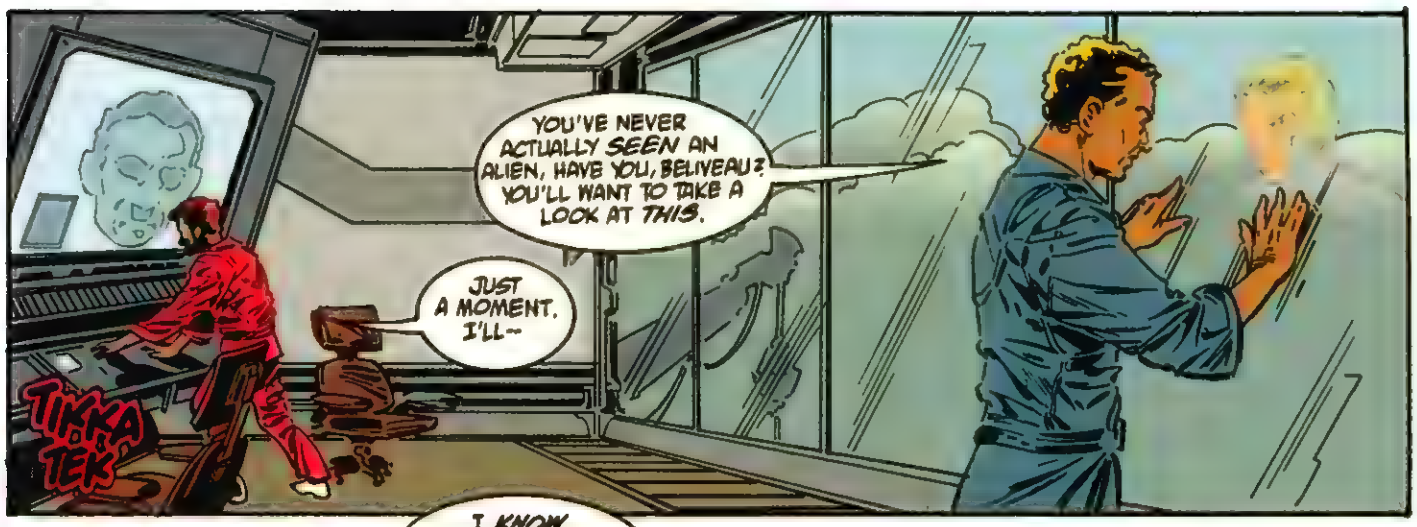
LAST ONES OUT, SARGE.
AND JUST IN TIME--LOOK!


KRONNG
JESUS!

I CAN'T HOLD THEM BACK WITHOUT BRAVO TEAM--THE OPENING IS TOO WIDE! ENEMY REINFORCEMENTS WILL BE HERE ANY MINUTE!
WHAT'S OUR BACKUP PLAN, LIEUTENANT?
LIEUTENANT? DO YOU COPY?
LIEUTENANT?!

ALPHA UNIT! REPORT! ARE YOU SECURE?
WE'RE ON LAND, IF THAT'S WHAT YOU MEAN! BUT THESE BUGS'LL BE CRAWLIN' UP OUR BUMS IN ANOTHER MINUTE!
MAINTAIN YOUR POSITION! BRAVO UNIT! FAN OUT--
--ALONG THE PERIMETER OF THE WATER, FIND SOME COVER AND DIG IN!
ROGER! LET'S GO, PEOPLE!
THIS IS YOUR LIEUTENANT, MARINES! NOTHING BUT AMMO AND TARGETS! TIME TO EARN YOUR PAY!
THE ALIENS ARE IN THE HARBOR! RUN!

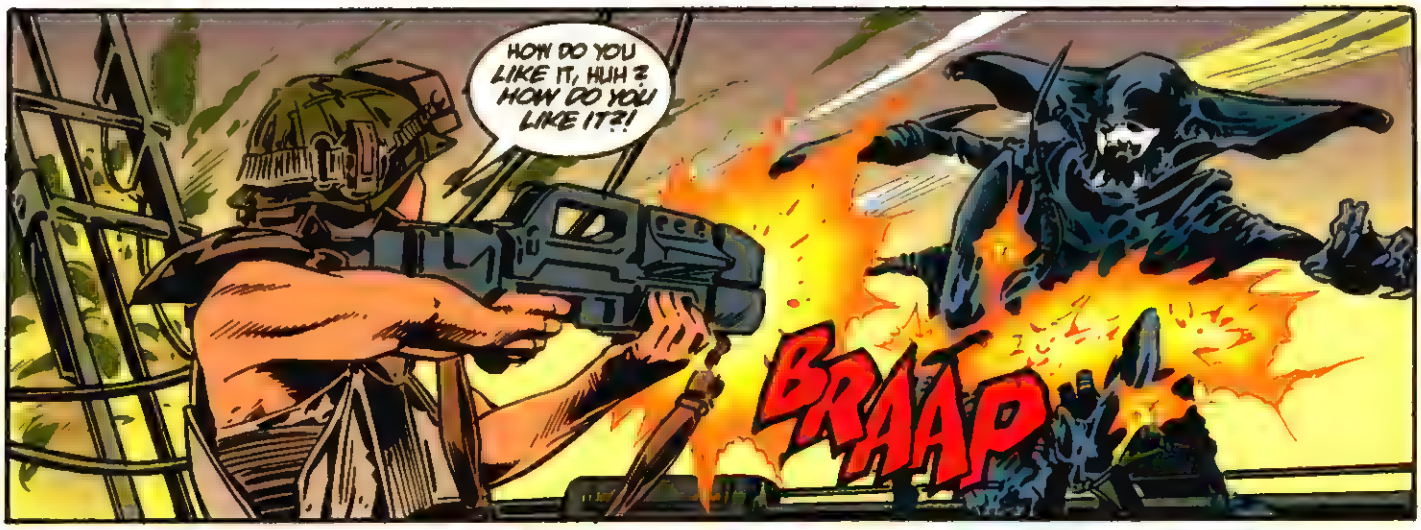

BRACKEN'S WORLD, SECTOR ONE, 14:38 HOURS.
LIEUTENANT! WHERE DO YOU THINK YOU'RE GOING?
THIS STOPPED BEING A TACTICAL BATTLE WHEN THAT GATE CAME DOWN, SERGEANT.
NOW ITS JUST A MATTER OF WHO DIES FIRST.


YOU'VE NEVER ACTUALLY SEEN AN ALIEN, HAVE YOU, BELIVEAU? YOU'LL WANT TO TAKE A LOOK AT THIS.
JUST A MOMENT. I'LL--
TIKKA TEK

I KNOW. BREATHTAKING, ISN'T IT?

MARYLAND! PULL UP! THEY CAN REACH YOU!
CHAKKA CHAKKA

ROGER. MAINTAINING HIGHER ALTITUDE!
THOOM


HOW DO YOU LIKE IT, HUH? HOW DO YOU LIKE IT?!
BRAAP

KEEP IT TOGETHER, VASQUEZ. JUST... KEEP IT TOGETHER.

SKARRREEE
MAKE DIE DOG!

THUNK
DAMN!
YOU'RE THE UGLIEST DAMN BUG I'VE EVER SEEN! AND I WOULDN'T HAVE WASTED A BREW ON YOU IF I DIDN'T MEAN THAT!
WHY DON'T YOU COME A LITTLE CLOSER'N' LET ME GET A LOOK AT YA?

OH, YEEAAAH! YOU ARE ONE PRIME GRADE SPECIMEN, MY FRIEND! JUST COME A LITTLE BIT CLOSER!
COME ON, NOW! I'M NOT GONNA HURT YA! I'M NOT GONNA HURT YA!
BUK-CHOOM!
I'M GONNA BLOW YOUR FREAKIN' BRAINS OUT, BUT I AIN'T GONNA HURT YA!
OOOH... THAT FELT GOOD!
SORRY TO STEAL YOUR KILL, MARINE, BUT I HAVEN'T PLUGGED A BUG IN MONTHS!
NAME'S HERK MONDO. YOU EVER NEED A FAVOR, I OWE YOU BIG! HASTA!

LIEUTENANT! I'VE SOMETHING THAT MIGHT HELP!
WHAT IS IT?
BUDDA BUDDA

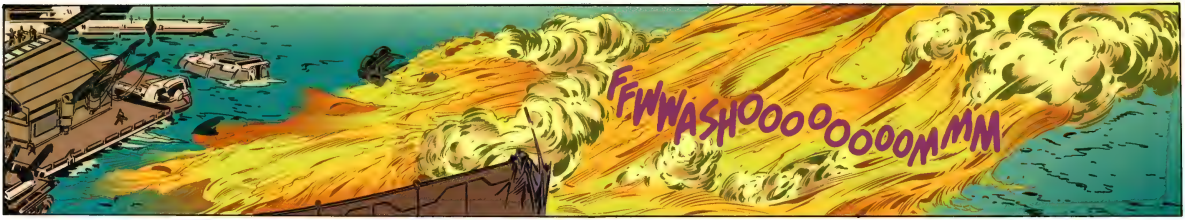
THE BUGS HATE FIRE, RIGHT? AND THAT WATER'S FULL OF KELP, RIGHT? SO WE TORCH THE KELP!
WHAT DO YOU MEAN? IT'S UNDER-WATER!

WE CAN START A CHEMICAL FIRE! IT'LL BURN OFF THE OXYGEN WITHIN THE PLANT CELLS! IT MAY BE HOT ENOUGH TO KILL THE BUGS!
THERE'S ONLY ONE PROBLEM.

ONCE IT STARTS, THERE'S NO STOPPING IT.
THAT'S NO GOOD. THE BRACKEN'S WORLDERS--

--CAN GO SCREW THEMSELVES! I'M ENDING THIS.

SPLOOSH
EVERYBODY FALL BACK! GET AWAY FROM THE WATER! NOW!
FWWSSSH...
WHOOOOM
SKREEEEE


FFWWASHOOOOOOOOMMM

BWARAAAM
SKREEEE
SKROOOMM

GOD, I LOVE THE SMELL OF CHEMICAL FIRES IN THE MORNING.
REMINDS ME OF SOLANO'S MOON.

WELL, IT'S BREWSKI TIME. GOOD, SUCKERS!
WHATEVER.

WHO THE HELL WAS THAT?
THAT IS A LIVING LEGEND.
"HERK MONDO, SELF-PROCLAIMED PROFESSIONAL BUG HUNTER. THEY TOLD STORIES ABOUT HIM IN BOOT CAMP. SAID HE'S TAKEN ON ENTIRE HIVES SINGLE-HANDEDLY.
"WORD IS, THE GUY'S A TOTAL PSYCHO. HE ACTUALLY ENJOYS THIS CRAP."
"HE'S GOT TO HAVE SERIOUS IMPLANTS. THINK HE'D JOIN THE MISSION?"
DOUBT IT. HE'S GOT A PROBLEM WITH AUTHORITY FIGURES.
LIKE THEY DON'T?
ALL RIGHT, MARINES. REPORT TO THE MED-CENTER AND THEN ASSEMBLE IN THE COMMAND ROOM. WE'RE GETTING OUT OF HERE.

YOU KNOW HE TALKS TO HIS SCHWARTZ THE SAME WAY: "THIS IS IT, LITTLE HENRY! TIME TO EARN YOUR PAY!"

YOU STOW THAT CRAP, PRIVATE!

THE LIEUTENANT JUST GOT YOU THROUGH THE TOUGHEST COMBAT YOU'VE EVER SEEN. HOW ABOUT A LITTLE RESPECT?

C'MON, SARGE. YOU'RE NOT SERIOUS, ARE YOU?

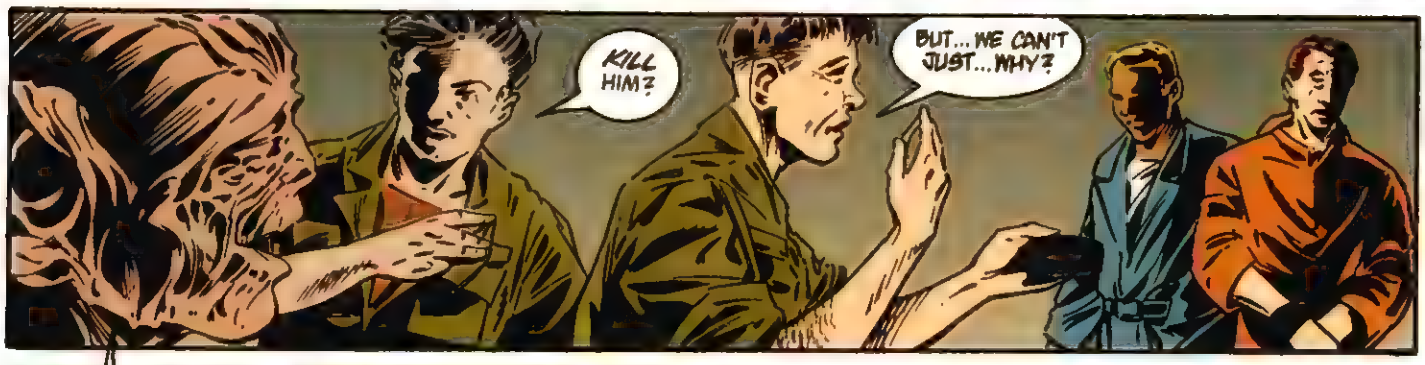
NO, NOT REALLY. I JUST DIDN'T FEEL LIKE WAITING IN LINE WITH THE REST OF YOU GRUNTS.

HA! SUCKERED!

CHEN. ROSEMAS. I HAVE SHARED MY JELLY WITH YOU FOR A WEEK NOW. WOULD YOU DO ME A SMALL FAVOR IN RETURN?

S-SURE.
YOU NAME IT.
EXCELLENT. YOU MAY COME IN.

YORMITAG HAS KIDNAPPED A HEATHEN INHABITANT OF THIS WORLD. I WANT YOU TO KILL HIM.


KILL HIM?
BUT... WE CAN'T JUST... WHY?

¿SISH¿ YORMITAG?
WITH PLEASURE.
KRNK

I FORGIVE YOU THIS TIME, BUT IF YOU DISOBEY ME AGAIN YOU SHALL NO LONGER RECEIVE THE JELLY.
YOUR FRIEND BEECH WILL SOON KNOW WHAT THAT IS LIKE...

...THERE'S NOTHING LEFT! WHAT ARE WE SUPPOSED TO DO?!
PLEASE! I UNDERSTAND YOUR CONCERNS, BUT WE'RE HERE TO DISCUSS SOLUTIONS--

SOLUTIONS?! MOST OF OUR KELP FARMS HAVE BEEN DESTROYED! IT'S GOING TO TAKE YEARS TO RESTORE THEM!

IT WAS THE MILITARY THAT BROUGHT ON THIS ATTACK AND THE MILITARY THAT DESTROYED OUR FARMS!

I DEMAND TO KNOW WHAT YOU AND YOUR MARINES ARE GOING TO DO ABOUT IT!
YEAH!
CLAP
CLAP
CLAP

DO YOU PEOPLE REALLY THINK ANYBODY GIVES A DAMN ABOUT YOUR BACKWATER LITTLE WORLD? IF YOUR GOVERNOR HAD CAUGHT ME IN A BAD MOOD, YOU'D ALL BE DEAD BY NOW!

THINK ABOUT THAT THE NEXT TIME YOU START MAKING DEMANDS TO A MILITARY OFFICER.

UHH... ANYBODY ELSE?

WHAT IS IT, BELIYEALI? I'M ON A TIGHT SCHEDULE.
I'LL BE BRIEF, THEN. TAKE VORMITAG AND ME ALONG WITH YOU.

NO. I'VE ALREADY FULFILLED MY ORDERS. I'M UNDER NO OBLIGATION TO TAKE YOU ALONG, AND YOU'D JUST SLOW US DOWN.

I HAVE... *INFORMATION* YOU'LL NEED IN ORDER TO ASSESS THE SITUATION.
IF YOU TAKE US, I PROMISE TO PROVIDE THIS INFORMATION TO YOU.

ALL RIGHT. BUT IF I FIND OUT YOU'RE JERKING ME AROUND, I'LL DUMP YOU *AND* VORMITAG ON THE NEAREST MINING COLONY.
DON'T WORRY. YOU *WON'T* BE DISAPPOINTED.

ARE YOU INSANE? YOU'RE GOING TO TELL HIM ABOUT THE PROJECT? IF HE KNOWS ABOUT BRADSHAW AND DOCTOR--
GET A GRIP ON YOURSELF.

WE NEED HENRY IN ORDER TO GET TO THE RESEARCH STATION.
I'LL GIVE HIM BITS AND PIECES OF THE PUZZLE--STRING HIM ALONG UNTIL WE FINISH OUR MISSION.

HE'S NOT AN IDIOT! WHAT IF HE STARTS TO PUT IT TOGETHER?
IT'S NOT WORTH THE RISK!

MAJOR BRADSHAW MUST BE PROTECTED AT ALL COSTS!

WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT? WE'RE HERE TO PROTECT OURSELVES AND ALPHA-TECH, NOT THAT MANIAC!
UH... OF COURSE. THAT'S WHAT I MEANT.

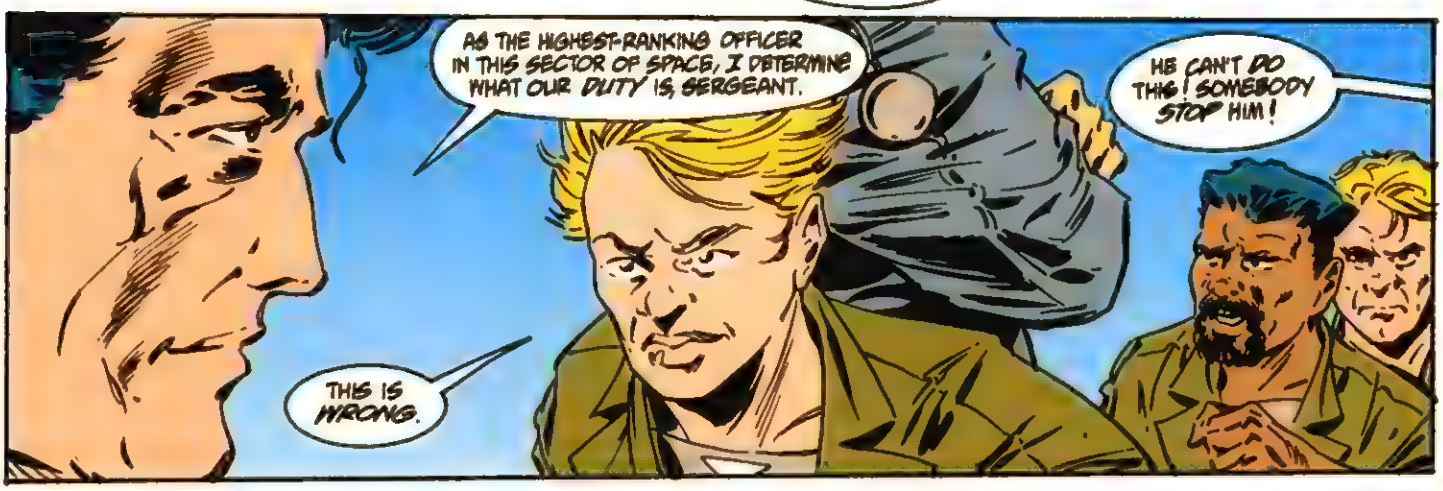
I KNOW THAT NONE OF YOU WERE LOOKING FORWARD TO A YEAR'S ASSIGNMENT OF MENIAL LABOR BUILDING A SUB-SPACE ARRAY. WELL, THE MISSION'S BEEN CHANGED.

WE'LL EVENTUALLY ARRIVE AT SECTOR HQ, BUT WE WON'T BE REPORTING FOR GRUNT WORK.

WE'LL BE ATTACKING IT. AN ARMY OF BUG-MEN HAVE TAKEN CONTROL OF THE BASE AND THE COMM ARRAY. WE'RE GOING TO TAKE IT BACK.

I ANTICIPATED DISSENTION, SO I HAD PROXIMITY-TRIGGERED MICRO-EXPLOSIVES PLANTED IN YOUR NECKS. THE BASE UNIT'S INSTALLED IN MY CHEST. ANYONE WHO GOES AWOL... DIES.

ARE YOU INSANE?!
IF WHAT YOU SAY IS TRUE, OUR FIRST DUTY IS TO FIND THE NEAREST SECTOR WITH A COMM ARRAY AND WARN THE CORE SYSTEMS!
SARGE IS RIGHT! LET'S GET OUTTA HERE!


AS THE HIGHEST-RANKING OFFICER IN THIS SECTOR OF SPACE, I DETERMINE WHAT OUR DUTY IS, SERGEANT.
HE CAN'T DO THIS! SOMEBODY STOP HIM!
THIS IS WRONG.

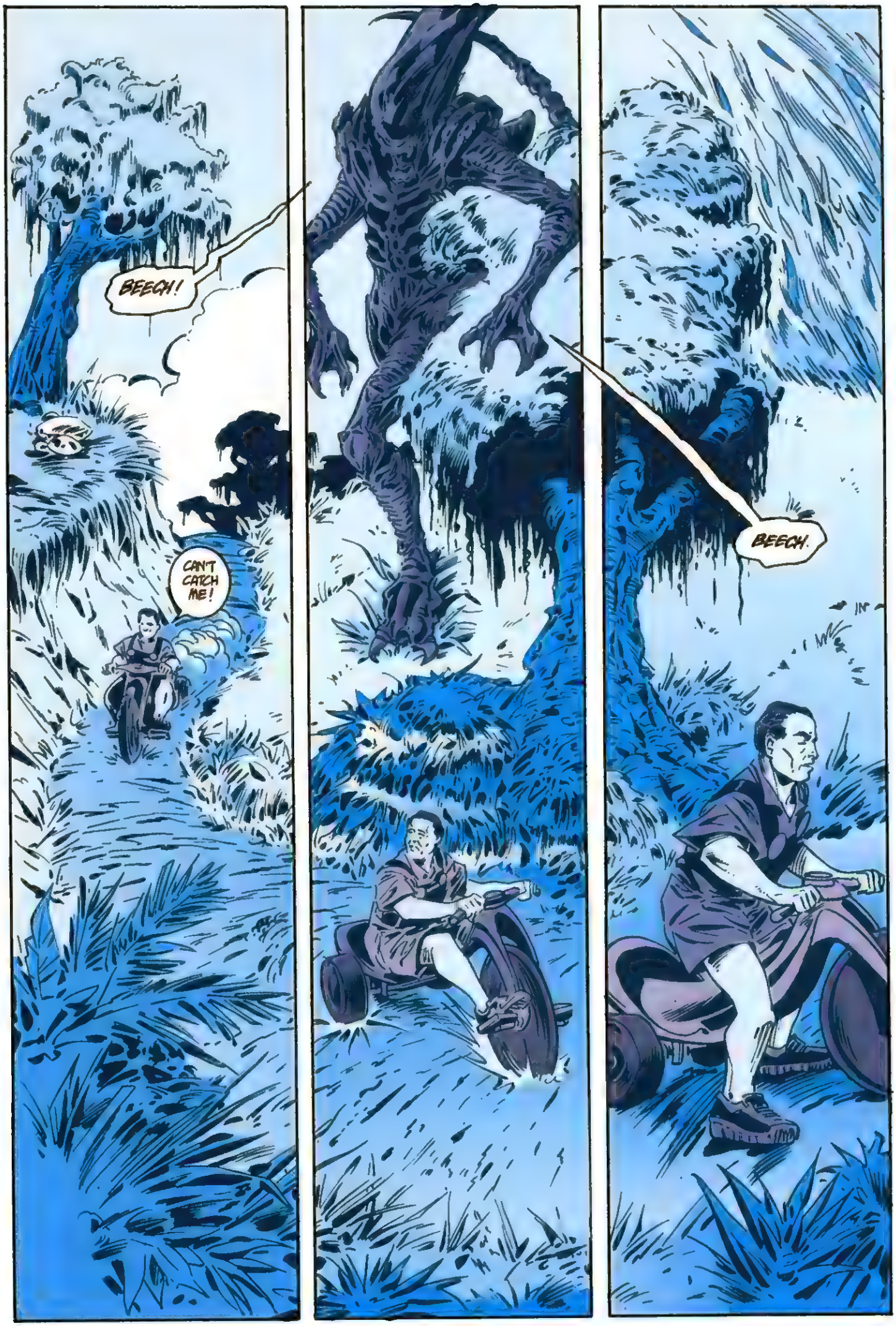
BEFORE YOU TRY ANYTHING STUPID, YOU SHOULD KNOW THAT MY HEARTBEAT TRIGGERS THE BASE UNIT. MY DEATH AUTOMATICALLY DETONATES ALL THE MICRO-EXPLOSIVES.

I DON'T CARE! I'M GONNA--
WAIT! DON'T TRY IT!
THE MELVILLE'S ORBIT HAS DECAYED. IT'S NOW ENTERING THE UPPER ATMOSPHERE OF BRACKEN'S WORLD.

BUT... BEECH IS ON-BOARD. ISN'T HE?
EVERY-ONE CALM DOWN! LISTEN! ARE YOU SURE?
YES. THE MELVILLE IS NOT CAPABLE OF WITHSTANDING RE-ENTRY. STRUCTURAL FAILURE IS IMMINENT.

HOW DO YOU KNOW THAT?
I'M CAPABLE OF MAINTAINING CONTACT WITH SHIP'S SENSORS AT PLANETARY DISTANCES, LIEUTENANT HENRY.

MULTIPLE HULL BREACHES. SHIP'S SYSTEMS ARE FAILING.
OH MY GOD.
BEECH!


BEECH!
CAN'T CATCH ME!
BEECH.

I HAVE SOMETHING FOR YOU, BEECH.
CAN'T CATCH ME!
CAN'T--

BEECH!

...CAN'T... hah...
...CAN'T...

HE'S... GONE.
WELL, MARINES. LOOKS LIKE WE WILL BE STAYING AFTER ALL.

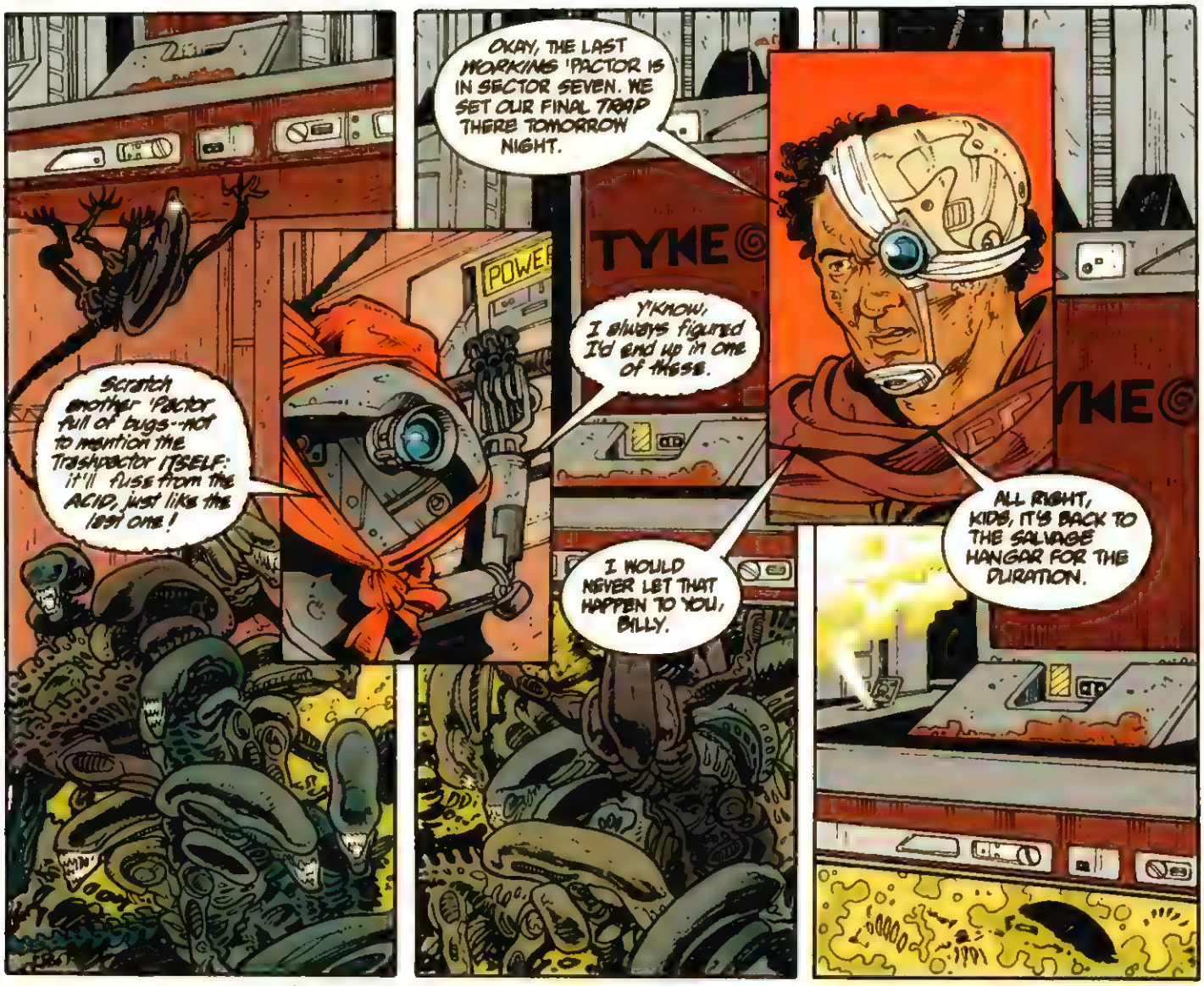
THIS IS THE NEXT TO LAST SHOT WE HAVE AT THIS, KIDS --MAKE IT COUNT. DELUCE?
JOJO?
YOUR BACK'S CLEAR AND COVERED.
TWENTY-TWO METERS, CLOSING, ZED-AHEAD.
SHIVA
BILLY, OPEN THE WEST GATE.
I'M ON IT, BOSS!
EIGHT METERS.
SABRO-STIK
standing by...

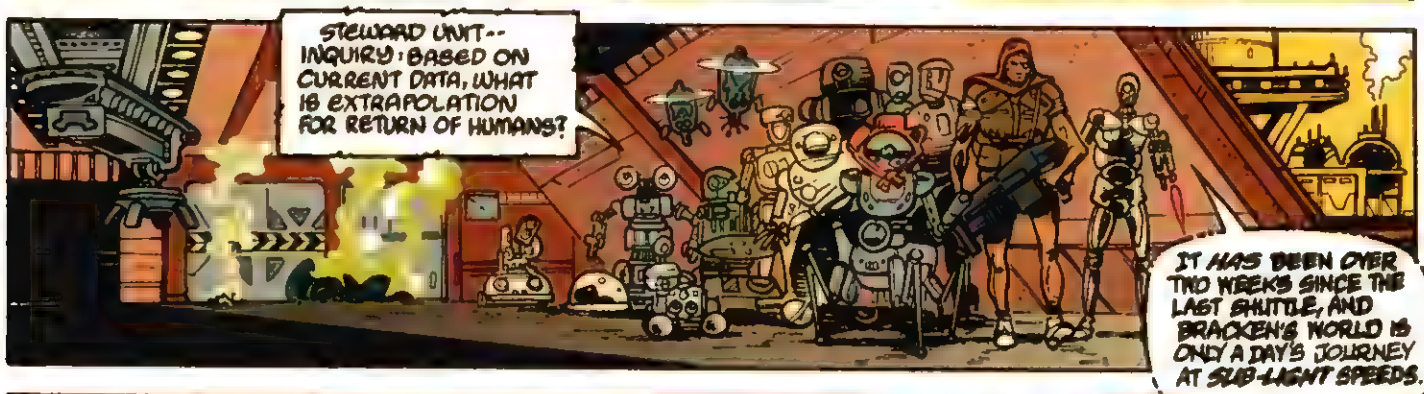
WEST

C'MON, BILLY! GET THAT GATE CLOSED!
I'M TRYING, I'M TRYING!
TASK

TRY HARDER! OF ALL THE USELESS ...HOW CAN THEY EXPECT ME TO FIGHT WITH THIS JUNK?!
!

YOU DON'T SCARE ME...
...IT'S NOT IN MY PROGRAMMING.
ENGAGE TRASH-PACTOR.
'PACTOR ACTIVATED.
SMAT


Scratch another 'Pactor full of bugs--not to mention the Trashpactor ITSELF: it'll fuse from the ACID, just like the last one!
OKAY, THE LAST WORKING 'PACTOR IS IN SECTOR SEVEN. WE SET OUR FINAL TRAP THERE TOMORROW NIGHT.
Y'KNOW, I always figured I'd end up in one of these.
I WOULD NEVER LET THAT HAPPEN TO YOU, BILLY.
ALL RIGHT, KIDS, IT'S BACK TO THE SALVAGE HANGAR FOR THE DURATION.


STEWARD UNIT-- INQUIRY: BASED ON CURRENT DATA, WHAT IS EXTRAPOLATION FOR RETURN OF HUMANS?
IT HAS BEEN OVER TWO WEEKS SINCE THE LAST SHUTTLE, AND BRACKEN'S WORLD IS ONLY A DAY'S JOURNEY AT SUB-LIGHT SPEEDS.

Do you think the bugs have infested Bracken's World like they have here, boss?
I DON'T KNOW. BUT I DO KNOW THAT THEY WILL RETURN.
YOU MUST HAVE WHAT HUMANS CALL FAITH.

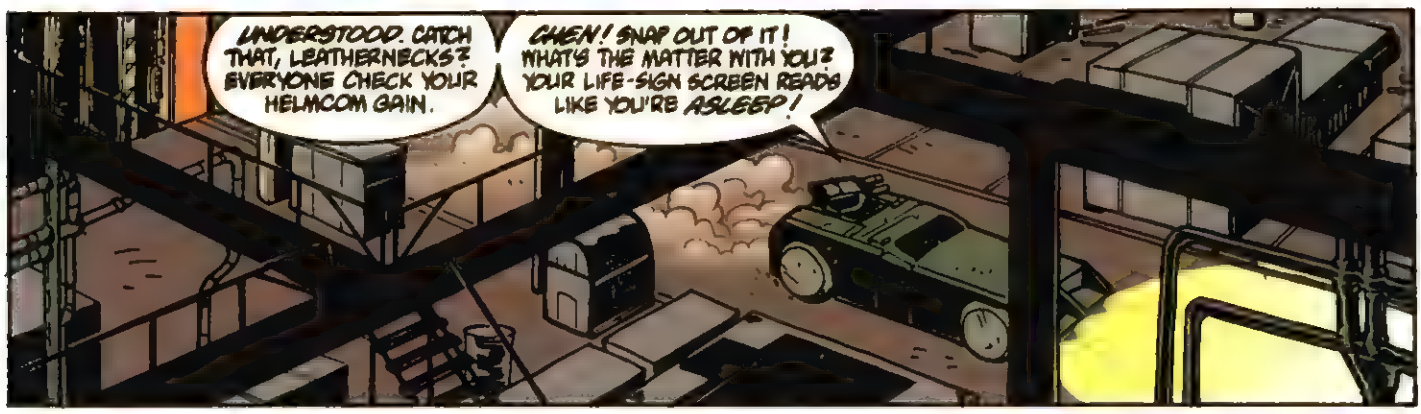
IT'S BEEN ALMOST TWO YEARS SINCE I ARRANGED TO HAVE A WEAPONS CACHE HIDDEN HERE. WHAT BETTER HIDING PLACE THAN AN AUTOMATED MINING OPERATION ORBITING A MUDBALL LIKE BRACKEN'S WORLD, eh, LIEUTENANT?
06
HOG
IF YOU WERE SO DAMN CLEVER, BELIVEAU, YOU WOULDN'T HAVE LET THIS SITUATION GET OUT OF HAND IN THE FIRST PLACE. MARYLAND, ANY SIGN OF ALIEN ACTIVITY?
NORTH
21
NEGATIVE, LIEUTENANT. WE'RE CLEAR ON FINAL WITH A GREEN THREE-SIX-ZERO. APPROACHING NORTH GATE OF SALVAGE HANGAR.

THE JOLIET MINING FACILITY IS SUPERVISED BY A FEW HUMANS, BUT THE REST OF THE CREW ARE OBSOLETE SYNTHETICS.
NYL
THE SYNTHS ARE ALL PROTOTYPES, BUILT DURING EARLY RESEARCH INTO ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE. SOME OF THEM ARE QUITE AMUSING, RESEMBLING TOASTERS WITH POSITRONIC BRAINS.
THE SHOP STEWARD IS A CURRENT MODEL, HOWEVER. I PLACED HIM MYSELF. HE HAS COMBAT PROGRAMMING, AND CAN HANDLE ANY FORESEEN CONTINGENCY.

ROS
CHE
NYL
SEE, THANKS, SARGE.
OKAY, LISTEN UP! I WANT A STANDARD NINETY-FAN DEPLOY OUT OF THE APC, FRONT AND BACK, TWO SQUADS.
VASQUEZ, FORSYTHE, RAKE: ON POINT FOR FIRST—ROSEMAS, CYERKO, CHEN: ON POINT FOR SECOND.

CHE
FOR THIS CRAP DETAIL...
I'LL NEED TO FORTIFY...
A LITTLE BUG BALM...
I'LL GAIN NO PAIN...
DROP AND DUST, MARYLAND.
A-FIRM, EL-TEE.
STAY ON STATION, THIS WILL JUST TAKE A FEW MIKES.

ETV
ETV
GIVE ME A HEADING, DELIVERAL.
ABOUT EIGHTY METERS AHEAD--UP BROADWAY. AREA SIX, WEST BAY. THE HANDWEAPONS ARE STORED THERE, BUT THE ATTACK SHIP IS HIDDEN NEXT TO ONE OF THE ATMOSPHERIC PROCESSING PLANTS.
BY THE WAY, SERGEANT, THESE STRUCTURES ARE SHIELDED, SO EM STATIC SHOULD BE AT A MINIMUM.

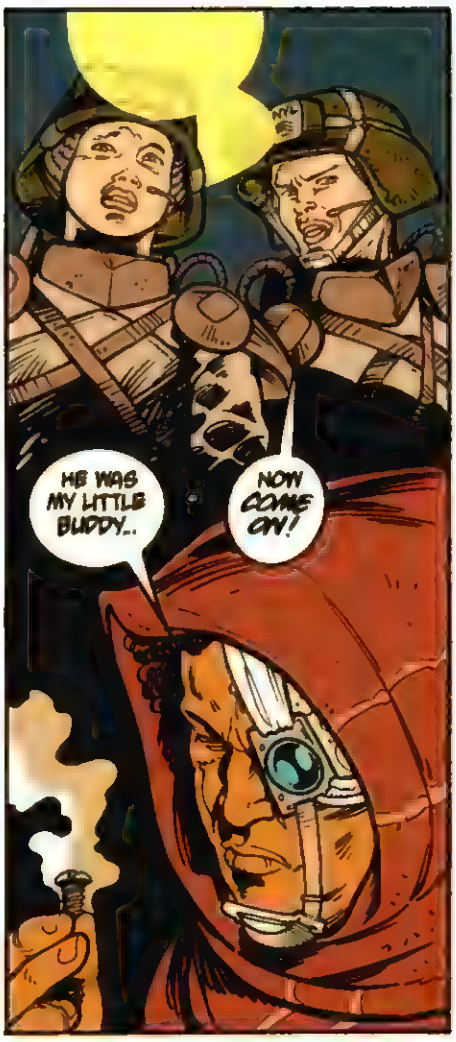

UNDERSTOOD. CATCH THAT, LEATHERNECKS? EVERYONE CHECK YOUR HELMCOM GAIN.
CHEN! SNAP OUT OF IT! WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH YOU? YOUR LIFE-SIGN SCREEN READS LIKE YOU'RE ASLEEP!

LET'S GO! WE ARE MOTHER GREEN AND HER KILLING MACHINE!
SECURE YOUR PERIMETER AND CALL IT IN, RAKE?
COPY BARGE--I'M ON IT!

THIS IS MY RIFLE. THERE ARE MANY LIKE IT, BUT THIS ONE IS MINE.
MY RIFLE IS MY BEST FRIEND. IT IS MY LIFE.
I MUST MASTER IT AS I MUST MASTER MY LIFE.
WITHOUT ME MY RIFLE IS USELESS. WITHOUT MY RIFLE I AM USELESS.
I MUST FIRE MY RIFLE TRUE. I MUST SHOOT STRAIGHTER THAN MY ENEMY WHO IS TRYING TO KILL ME.
CHE
I MUST SHOOT HIM BEFORE... UH...I CRASH.
OH GOD--I NEED ANOTHER HIT... AAAH?!
YAAAAAAHH!
BRAAAPP

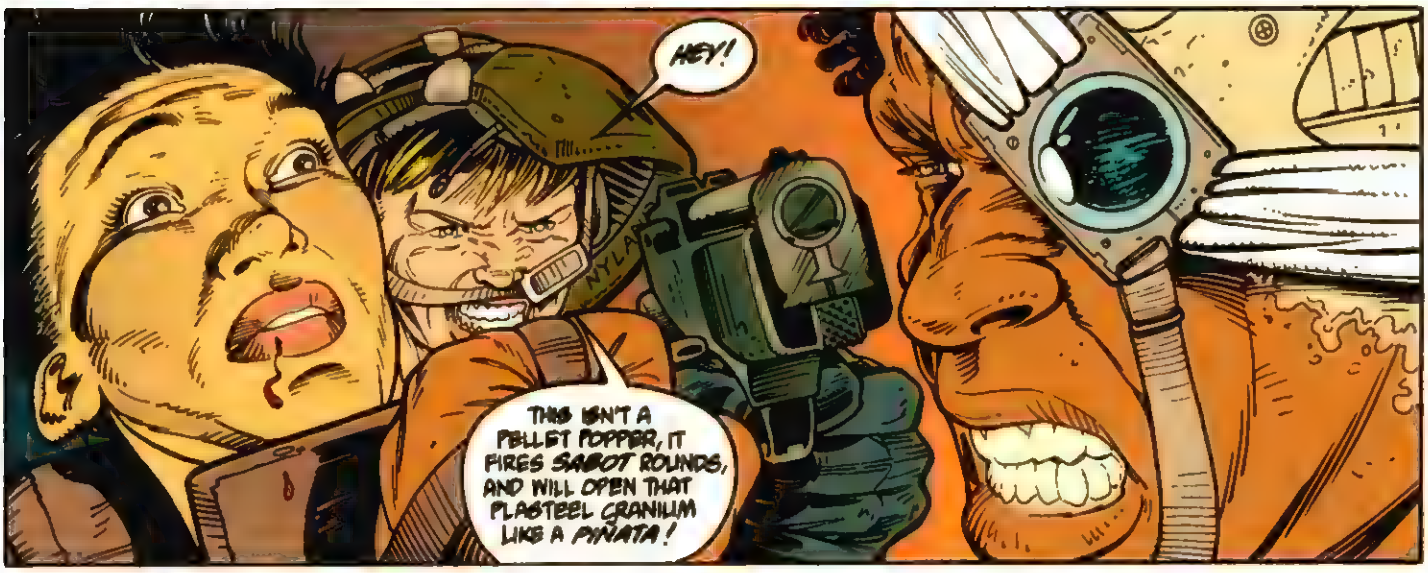
STAND DOWN, PRIVATE!
YOU ARE NOT ON A SWEEP AND CLEAR--
--YOU WILL NOT DISCHARGE YOUR WEAPON WITHOUT MY PERMISSION!
YOU HAVE BOLLO'D FOR THE LAST TIME...
YOU'RE LUCKY ALL YOU HIT WAS A HUNK OF PLASTIC.
PLASTIC?
WHO...?
WE HAVE SACRIFICED MUCH TO DEFEND THIS PLACE...AT LEAST RESPECT US FOR THAT.
AFTER WEEKS OF WAITING FOR REINFORCEMENTS, THE FIRST THING YOU CHESTY-PULLERS DO IS SMOKE ONE OF MY MEN.
DIDN'T THEY TEACH YOU ANYTHING AT NEW PARIS? LIKE CHECKING YOUR TARGETS?
SHE KILLED BILLY.
SHIVA 7
SABO
MATE

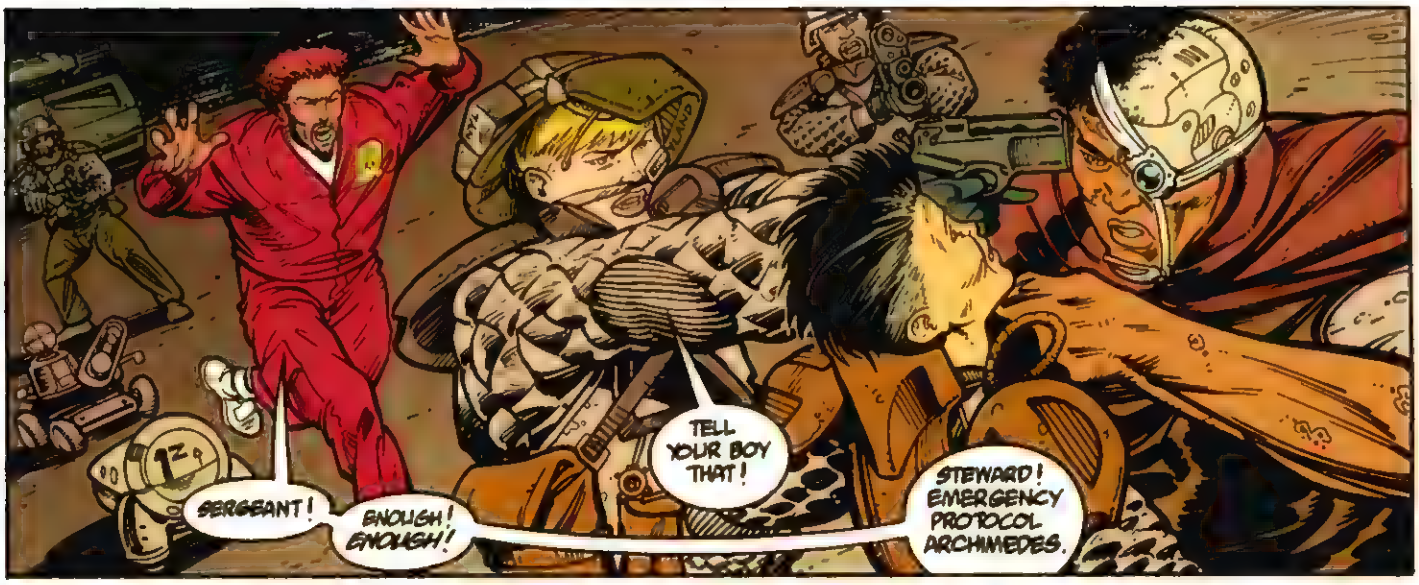
IT'S A SYNTH, NOT A CIV.
BILLY... I'M SORRY.


HE WAS MY LITTLE BUDDY..
NOW COME ON!

I WILL NOT HARM, OR BY OMISSION OF ACTION ALLOW TO BE HARMED, A COLONIAL MARINE OF THE UNITED STATES.
LISTEN UP, YOU--!

MAULF!
BACK OFF GUNNY!
THIS GYRENE NEEDS INSTRUCTION!


HEY!
THIS ISN'T A PELLET POPPER, IT FIRES SABOT ROUNDS, AND WILL OPEN THAT PLASTEEL CRANIUM LIKE A PIÑATA!


SERGEANT!
ENOUGH! ENOUGH!
TELL YOUR BOY THAT!
STEWARD! EMERGENCY PROTOCOL ARCHIMEDES.

ACKNOWLEDGED...
NYLAND, COMMO YOUR STATUS, OVER.
ALPHATECH
AH--P-RYM SECURED, OVER.
ROGER THAT. I'M EXITING THE APC, OUT.

HMMM... ACID BURNS. IT APPEARS THE ALIENS HAVE BEEN HERE, AND STEWARD HAS MAINTAINED THE SECURITY OF THIS COMPLEX NONETHELESS!
SABOT STICKS, BUBBLE GUNS, PULSES, AND PISTOLS --EVERYTHING FROM RPG'S TO H.E.'S.
HE DID GOOD, YES?
EH? OH, YES...
ALL RIGHT--PASS OUT WHAT'S NEEDED, LOAD THE REST.

SHITE! FIRST TIME IN THERMAL GEAR AND I'M SWEATING 'EM FILTHY HUMPING BOXES!
LIEUTENANT, WHAT HAPPENS TO MY PEOPLE HERE?
YOUR PEOPLE?
HIGHLY MOTIVATED!
NO SHAMMING!

HELLO, SIR, MY NAME IS DANNY. IT IS A PLEASURE TO MAKE YOUR ACQUAINTANCE.
RAK
UH, LIKE-WISE.
HAH! MAKIN FRIENDS, RAKE? GIVE IT A KISS! HAW!

THESE MACHINES ARE AS ALIVE AS I AM, AND HAVE HELPED PROTECT THIS COMPLEX...
LOOK--OUR COMMAND SHIP'S DESTROYED, C.O.C.'S BEEN CUT, WE'RE THREE WEEKS FROM A FIREBASE, LOW ON M.R.E.'S, NOT TO MENTION POOR LOGISTICS...
This-unit-will-not-leave-with-humans?
MOVEMENT!
GOTTA SIGNAL--BEARING 240 MARK 340.

THE ETV'S ARE WATER-COOLED. THEIR RECYCLING SYSTEM VENTS OUT OVER THE END OF THE HANGAR. THE ONLY OBSTRUCTION TO GETTING IN WOULD BE A FEW CIRCULATION FANS.

OKAY, SO WE PLUG UP THE RECYCLER VENT WITH A SHAPED CHARGE.

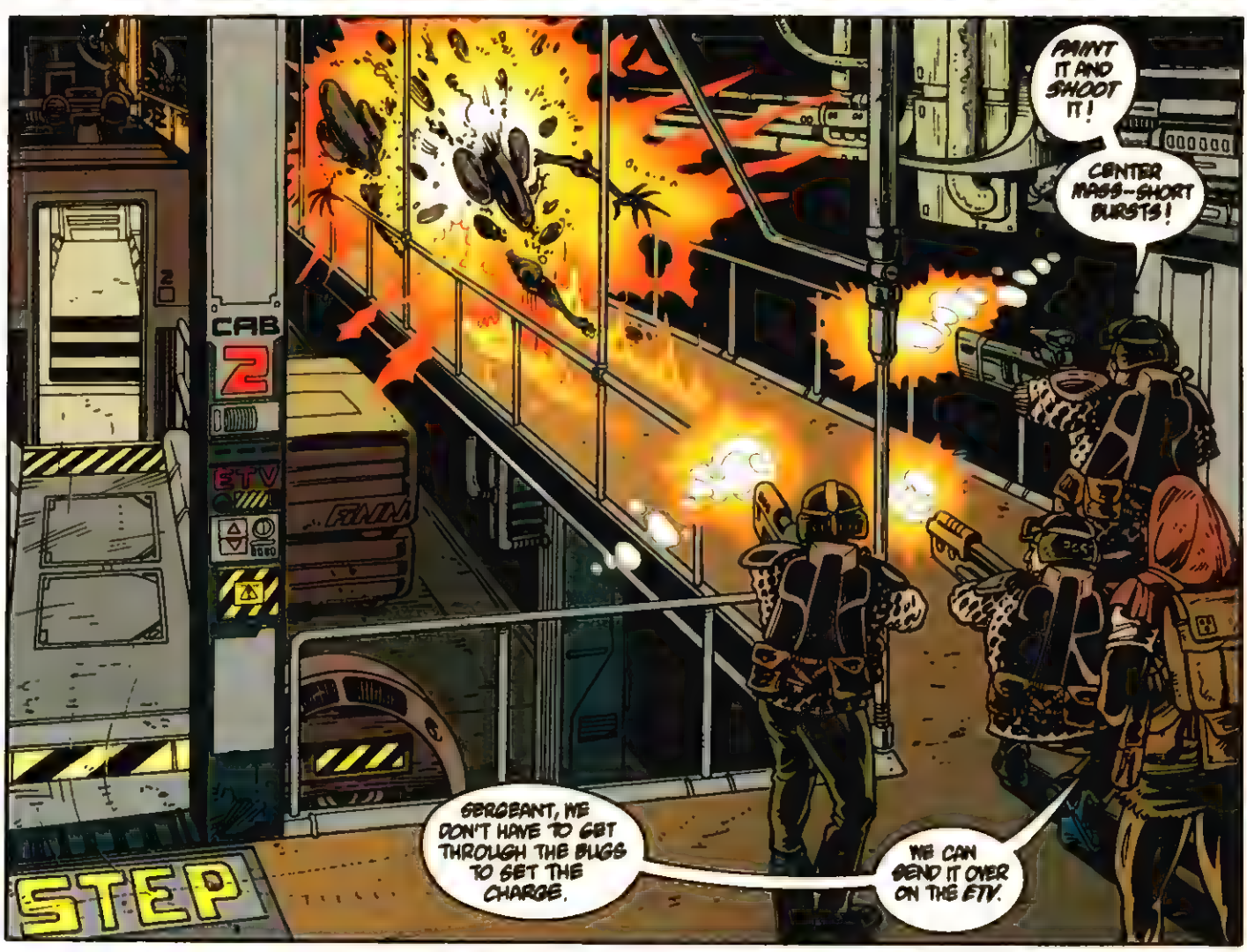
HEY RAKE, LOOKS LIKE EL-TEE'S GONNA LEAVE YOU, YOUR NEW TOY-BOY, AND HIS TIN PALS BEHIND TO RUST.

WHATTA HEART-BREAKER.

BUGGER OFF.

COLD-BLOODED.

REMEMBER, THESE AREN'T PULSE-RIFLES, THEY'RE ALPHA SHIMAS.
WATCH THE RECOIL--KEEP IT SHORT AND SWEET. ROSEMAS, TALK TO ME.
ROS
SCREW IT ON STRAIGHT, JARHEAD, OR I'LL KNOCK IT OFF AND DUMP DOWN YOUR NECK.
MILCO, SARGE.
EIGHT SIGNALS, RANGING FIFTY TO SIXTY METERS ALONG ONE AXIS.
CHANGING DIRECTION... BEARING OH-FIVE MARK ZERO.
THEY'RE HEADING TOWARD US --STRAIGHT ON. I CAN SEE 'EM!


PAINT IT AND SHOOT IT!
CENTER MASS--SHORT BURSTS!
CAB
2
ETV
STEP
SERGEANT, WE DON'T HAVE TO GET THROUGH THE BUGS TO SET THE CHARGE.
WE CAN BEND IT OVER ON THE ETV.

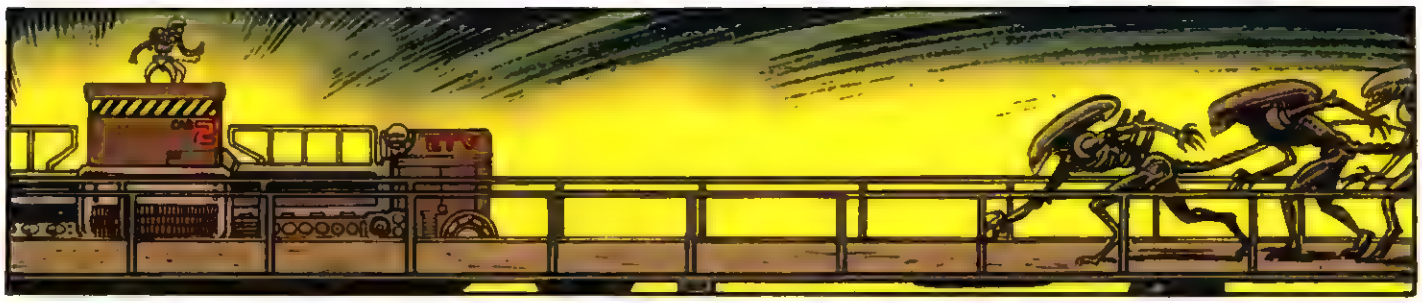
THERE'S A CATCH.
ALWAYS IS.
MANUAL DETONATOR. SOMEONE HAS TO RIDE THE ETV OVER.
SHI

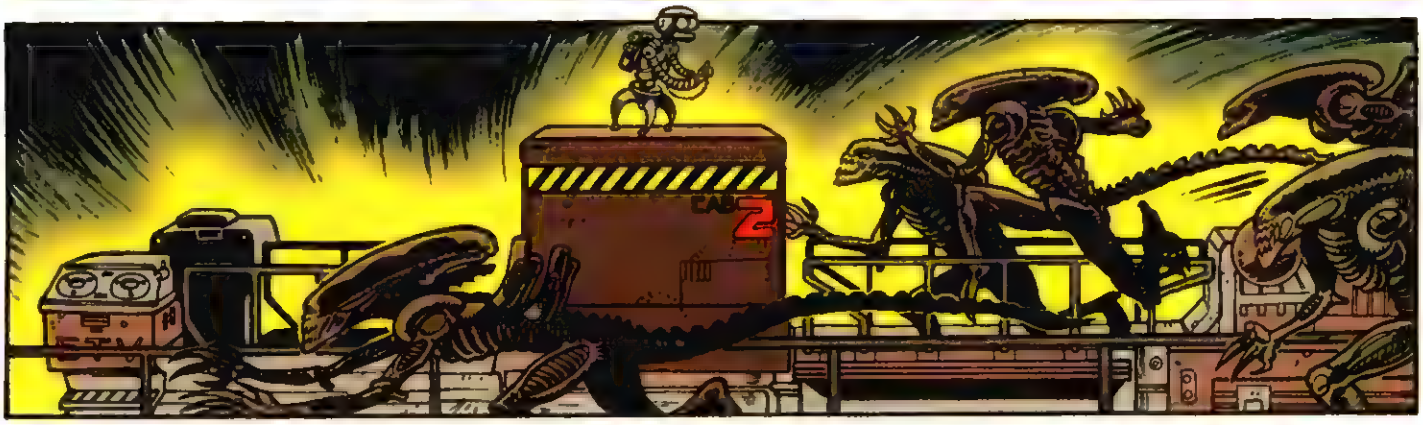
I'll take that ride.

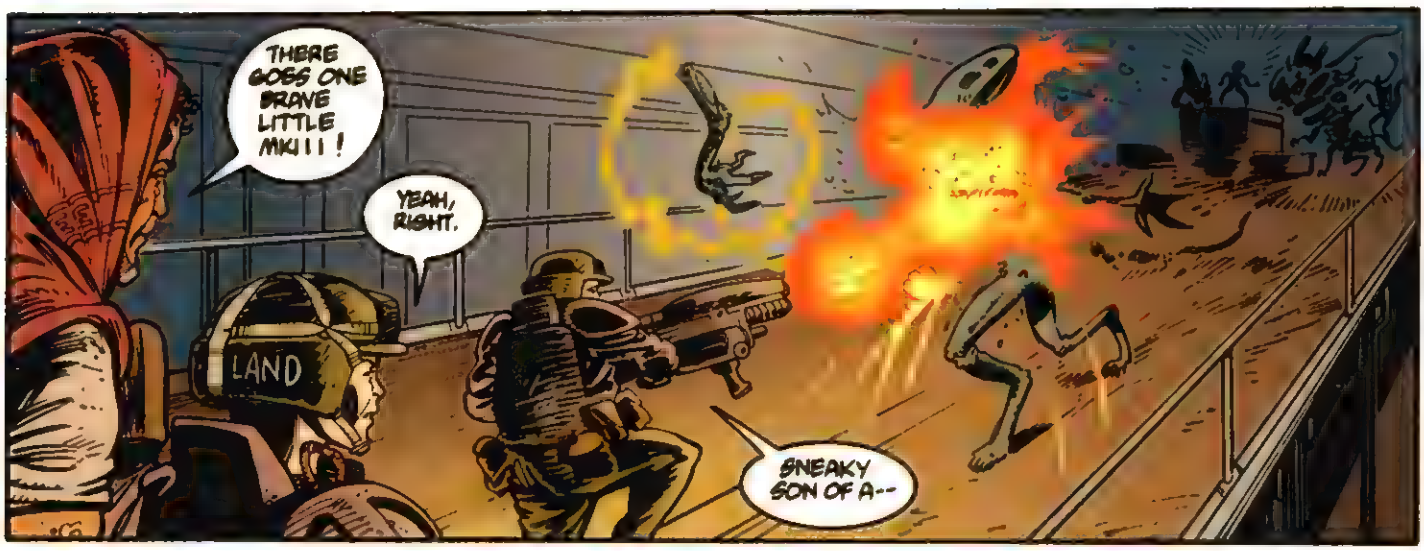
ARE YOU CERTAIN, JODY?
Oh, YES. Please, I'll do a very good job.

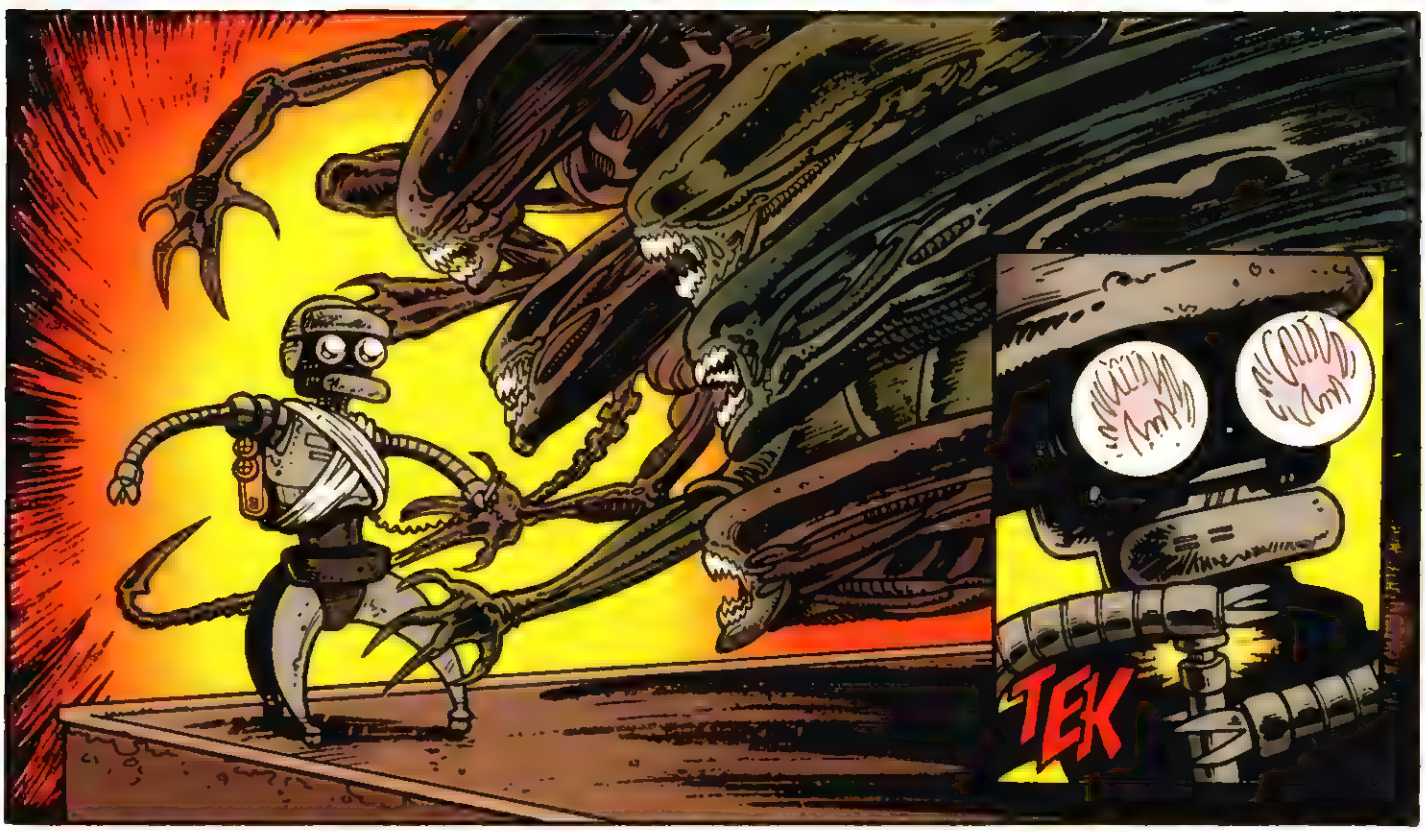
IT MEANS AN IRREPARABLE SWITCH-OFF FOR YOU.
ETV
I KNOW.
The humans are in trouble and I can help.

CAB 2
ETV
CAB 2
LET'S GO! LET'S DO IT!





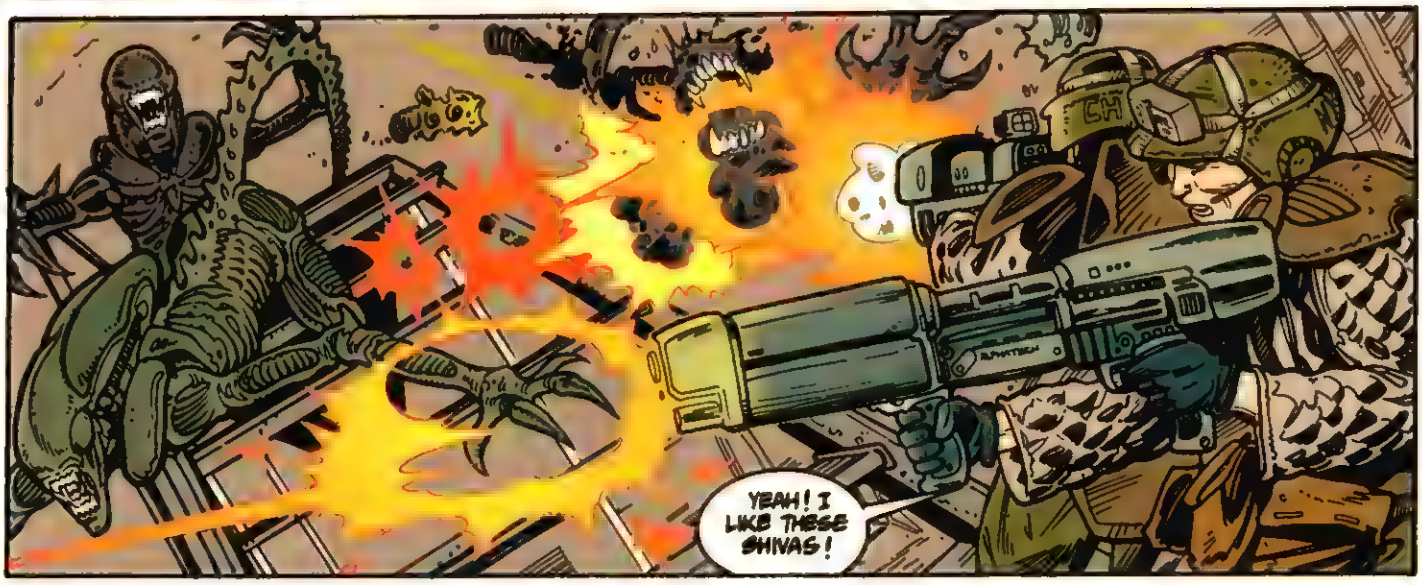

THERE GOES ONE BRAVE LITTLE MKIII!
YEAH, RIGHT.
LAND
SNEAKY SON OF A--


TEK

WHISKEY TANGO FOXTROT, OVER!
WE'VE PLUGGED THE HOLE, EL-TEB. VASQUEZ, STATUS, OVER?
CONFIRMED. NO NEW TARGETS ENTERING, BUT...
VAS
...THERE ARE STILL BUGS IN THE HANGAR!
SHIV

WELL, WE GOT THE APC WEIGHTED ...LET'S PULL OUT!

ALL RIGHT! EVERYONE FALL BACK!
'BOUT TIME!
BOSTON, RBV HOLD UP.
COPY THAT.


YEAH! I LIKE THESE SHIVAS!

MAN OH MAN...

GET SOME!

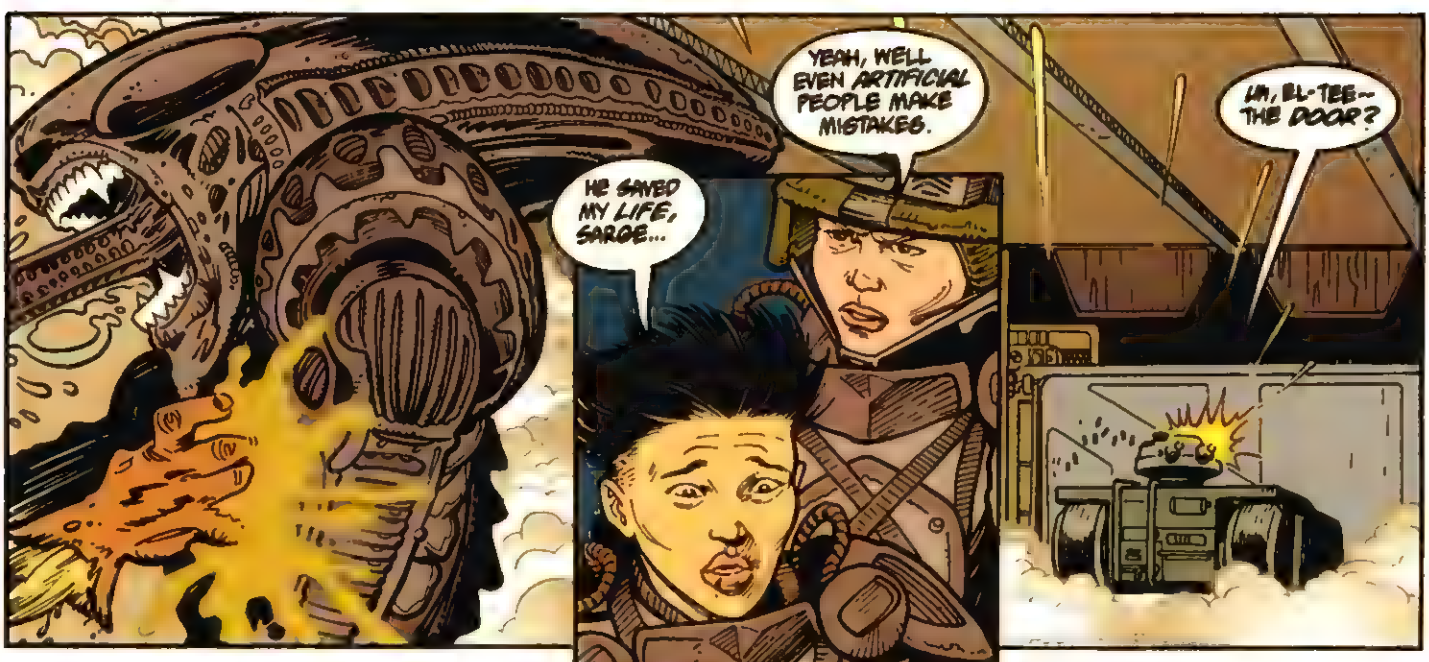
ROSEMAS-- HAVE YOU SEEN STEWARD?
HEY MAN--I AIN'T NO BABY SITTER!
GO, GO, YOU-

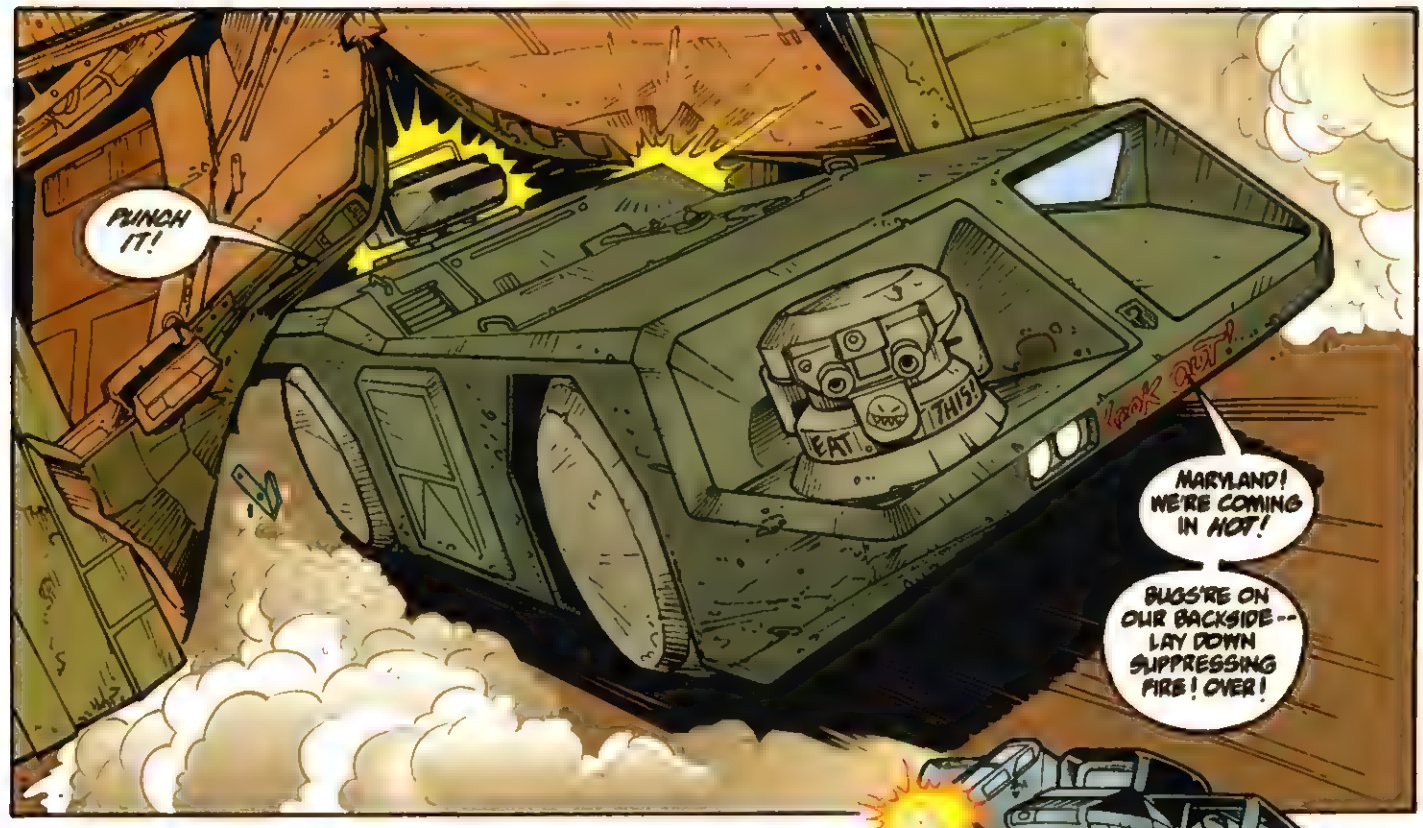
RAK
SLOW MAN--?!

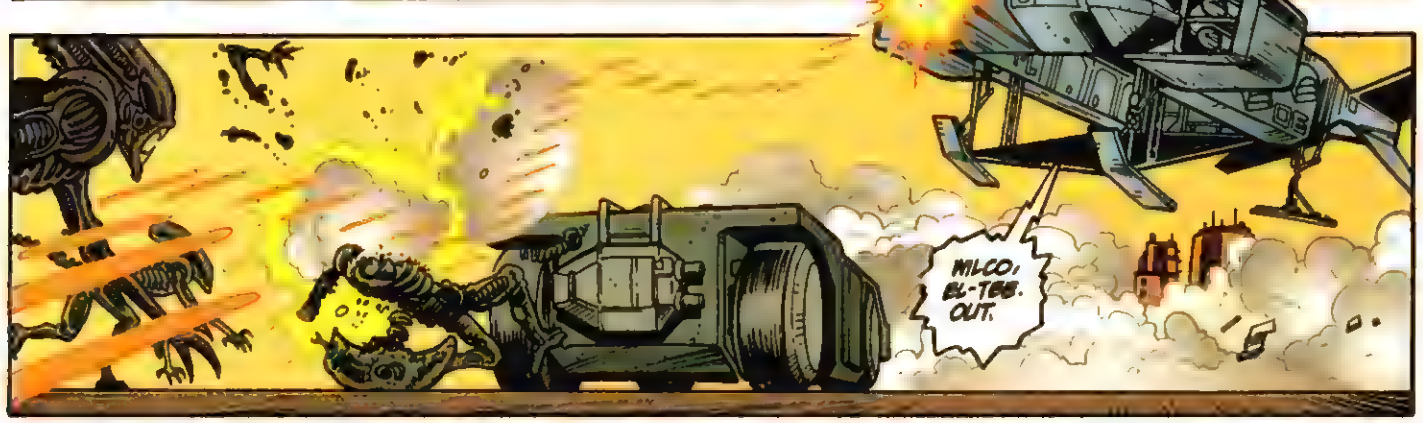
RAK
SLOW AND STEADY WINS THE RACE, MARINE.

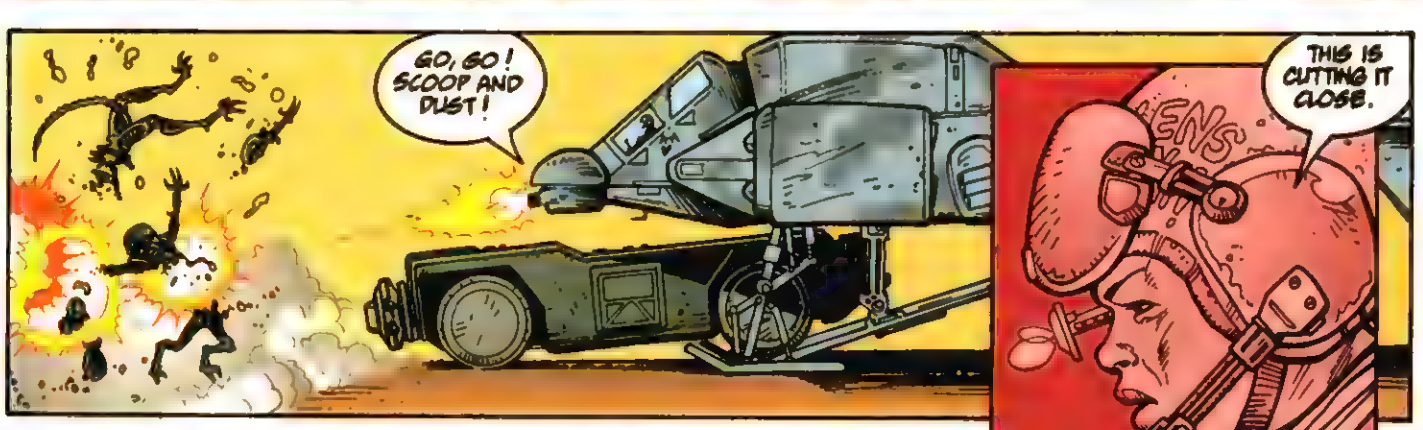
AHH-- BASTARDS! LET'S DO IT!
C'MON, PRIVATE! WE ARE LEAVING!
BUT...THE SYNTH-- STEWARD!

GO!
OUR MISSIONS HERE ARE FINISHED!
NO!


YEAH, WELL EVEN ARTIFICIAL PEOPLE MAKE MISTAKES.
HE SAVED MY LIFE, SARGE...
UH, EL-TEE-- THE DOOR?


PUNCH IT!
EAT
THIS!
MARYLAND! WE'RE COMING IN HOT!
BUGS'RE ON OUR BACKSIDE -- LAY DOWN SUPPRESSING FIRE! OVER!


MILCO, EL-TEE. OUT.


GO, GO! SCOOP AND DUST!

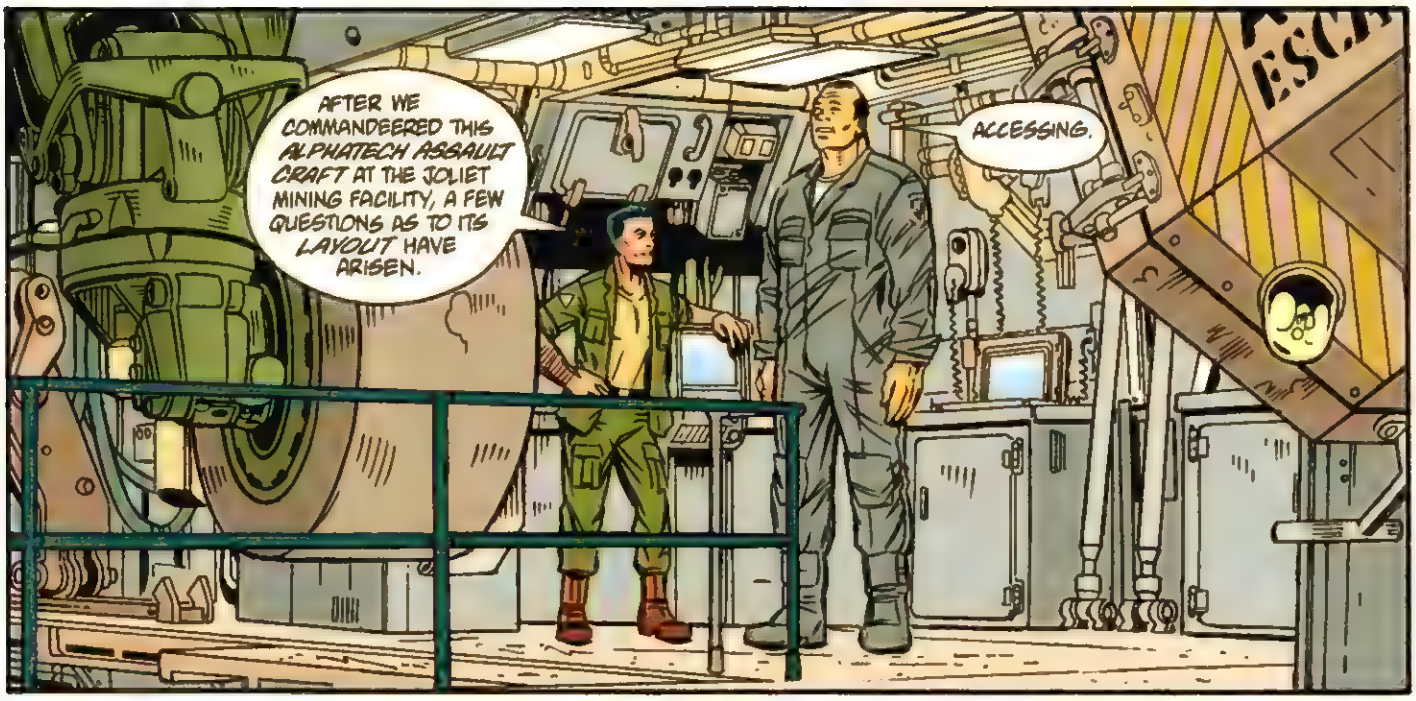
THIS IS CUTTING IT CLOSE.

MARYLAND! SCRATCH OUR BACK!
LIEUTENANT, YOU LEFT A VERY EXPENSIVE COMBAT MODEL SYNTHETIC BEHIND.
TOO BAD...
WE CAN'T JUST LEAVE HIM THERE!

STOW IT, PRIVATE. MARYLAND?
SMOKIN' 'EM, EL-TEE.
FREE AND CLEAR-- WE'RE OUTTA HERE.
LISTEN UP, YOU SHAMMING WASHOUT: STEWARD WAS A STRACK SOLDIER!
YOU FEEL BAD? HONOR HIS SACRIFICE BY SCREWING YOUR HEAD ON STRAIGHT FOR ONCE!
NYL
WITH A LITTLE WORK, YOU COULD BE ALMOST AS HUMAN AS HE WAS.
FOR
SARGE IS RIGHT--HE HAD REAL ALMA FOR A SYNTH.
YEAH...
RAK

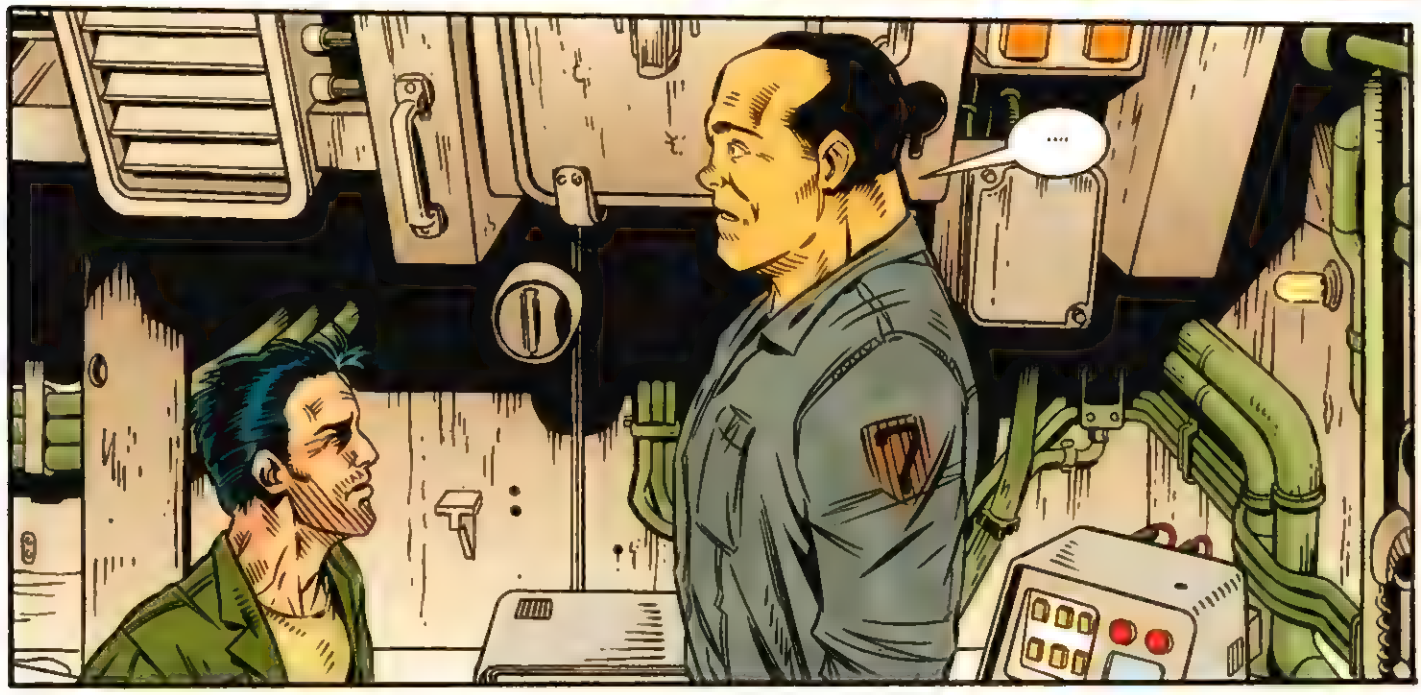
EMPTY.
.....
ALL RIGHT, BELIVEAU, LEAD US TO THAT ALPHATECH ASSAULT CRAFT--I WANT US OUT OF HERE PRONTO.
HOG

CEREBUS SYSTEM, 09:00 HOURS.
YOU CALLED ME, LIEUTENANT HENRY?
YES, LISTON. I HAVE A QUESTION ABOUT THIS SHIP. ACCESS THE COMPUTER'S STRUCTURAL DIAGRAMS.


AFTER WE COMMANDEERED THIS ALPHATECH ASSAULT CRAFT AT THE JOLIET MINING FACILITY, A FEW QUESTIONS AS TO ITS LAYOUT HAVE ARISEN.
ACCESSING.

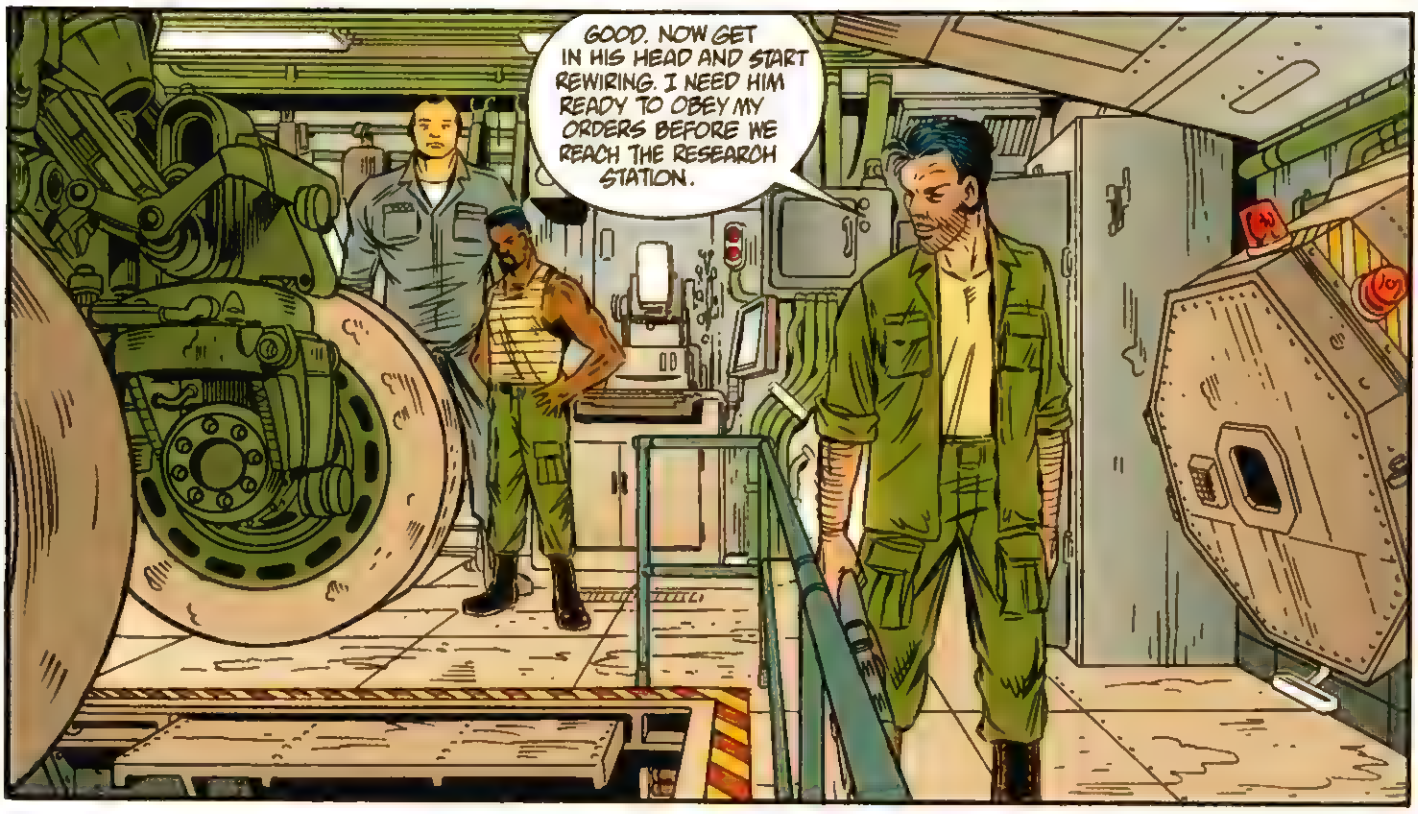
WHAT'S YOUR QUESTION, SIR?

WHERE'S THE BATHROOM, LISTON?

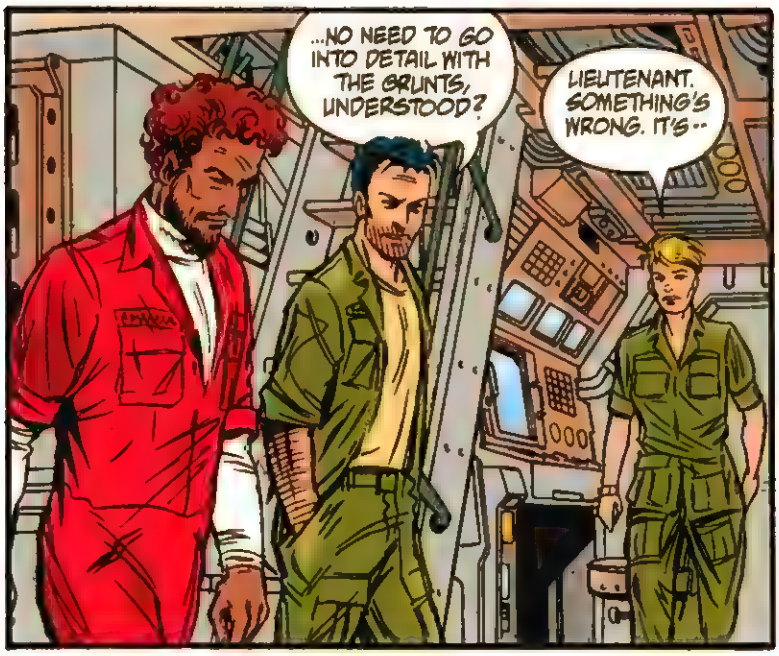

....

YOU CAN COME OUT NOW, I THINK.

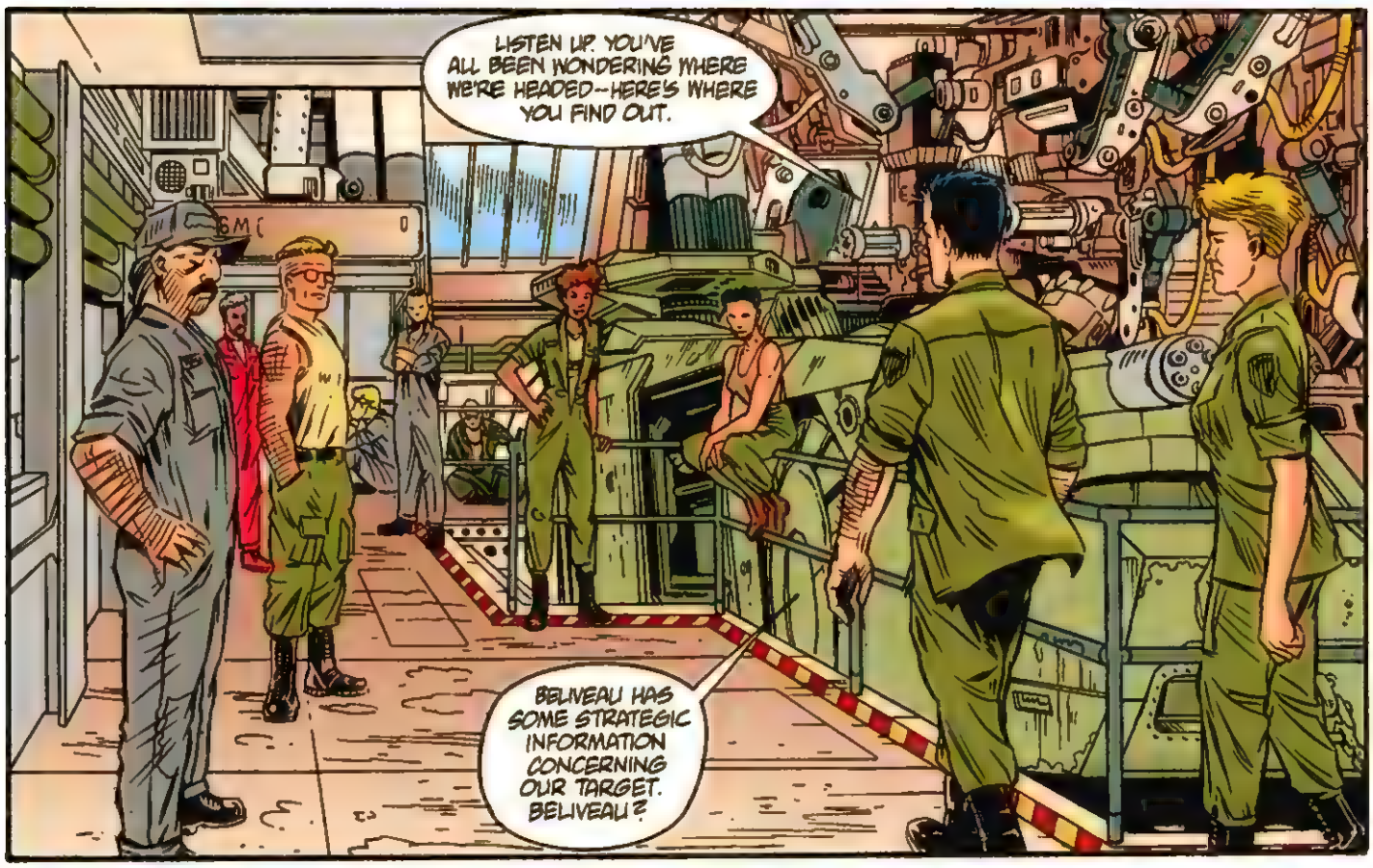
ANY CHANCE HE'LL SNAP OUT OF IT?
NOT A ONE. I PUT A FRACTAL SET IN THE STRUCTURAL DATA HE DOWNLOADED. HE'D SPEND THE REST OF HIS LIFE TRYING TO RESOLVE IT.

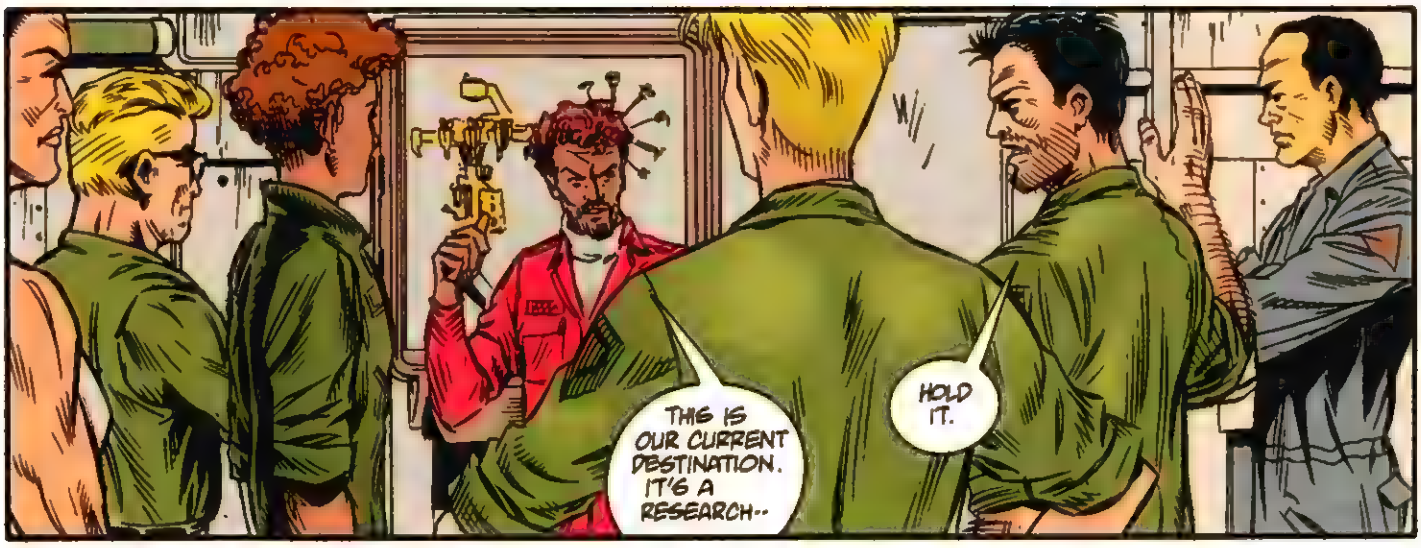

GOOD. NOW GET IN HIS HEAD AND START REWIRING. I NEED HIM READY TO OBEY MY ORDERS BEFORE WE REACH THE RESEARCH STATION.

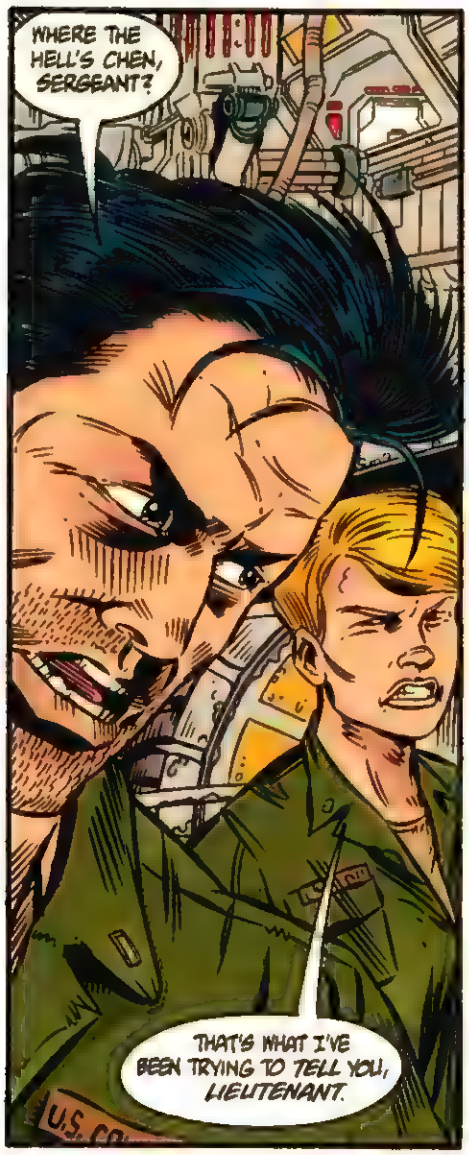
IF ONLY THE HUMAN MARINES WERE THAT EASY, EH, LIEUTENANT?


...NO NEED TO GO INTO DETAIL WITH THE GRUNTS, UNDERSTOOD?
LIEUTENANT. SOMETHING'S WRONG. IT'S--

AFTER THE MEETING, SERGEANT.
BUT--
AFTER THE MEETING, SERGEANT!


LISTEN UP. YOU'VE ALL BEEN WONDERING WHERE WE'RE HEADED--HERE'S WHERE YOU FIND OUT.
BELIVEAU HAS SOME STRATEGIC INFORMATION CONCERNING OUR TARGET. BELIVEAU?


THIS IS OUR CURRENT DESTINATION. IT'S A RESEARCH--
HOLD IT.


WHERE THE HELL'S CHEN, SERGEANT?
THAT'S WHAT I'VE BEEN TRYING TO TELL YOU, LIEUTENANT.

SHE'S IN MED-BAY. SHE'S SUFFERING FROM NAUSEA, DIS-ORIENTATION, DANGER-OUSLY LOW BLOOD PRESSURE... IT'S NOT LIKE ANY ILLNESS ON RECORD.

THEN DO WHAT YOU HAVE TO TO GET HER OUT OF BED ASAP. I WON'T HAVE THIS MISSION COMPROMISED BY THE FLU. UNDERSTOOD?
YES, SIR.

GO AHEAD, BELIVEAU.
AS I WAS SAYING...
...TRAITOR...

...THE STRUCTURE OF THE RESEARCH STATION IS RELATIVELY STANDARD. IT WAS SPECIFICALLY CONSTRUCTED FOR A BIO-ENGINEERING PROJECT CONCERNING THE USE OF--
BLAM
BELIVEAU

TRAITOR.

MONSTER!
FWAK

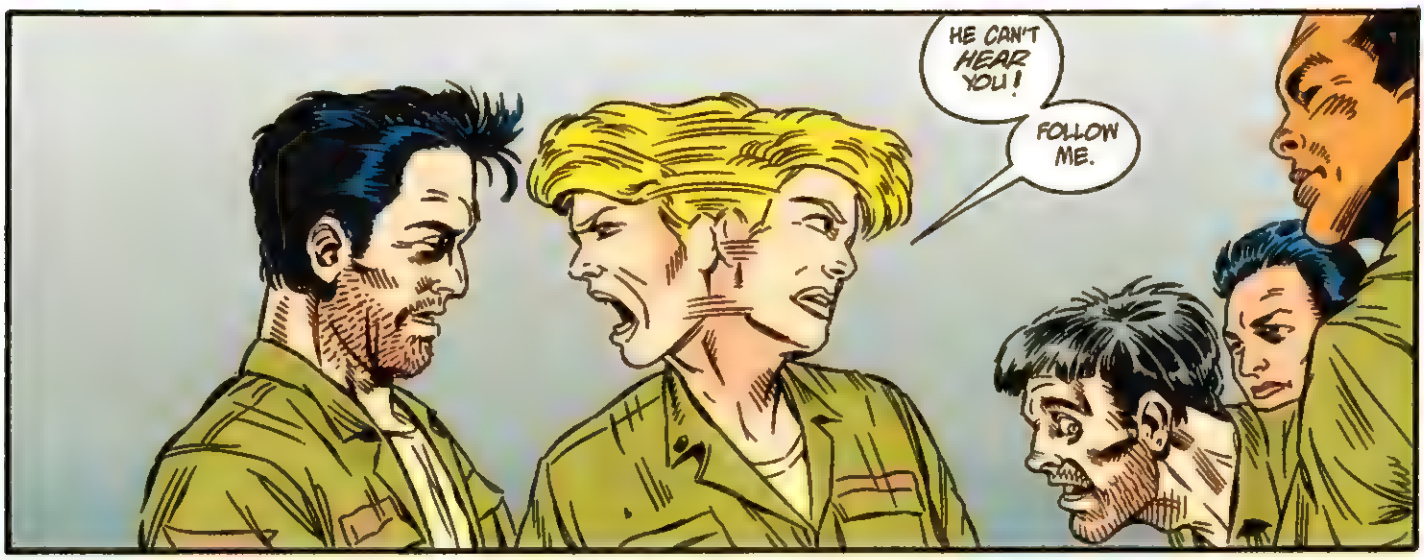
MONSTER!

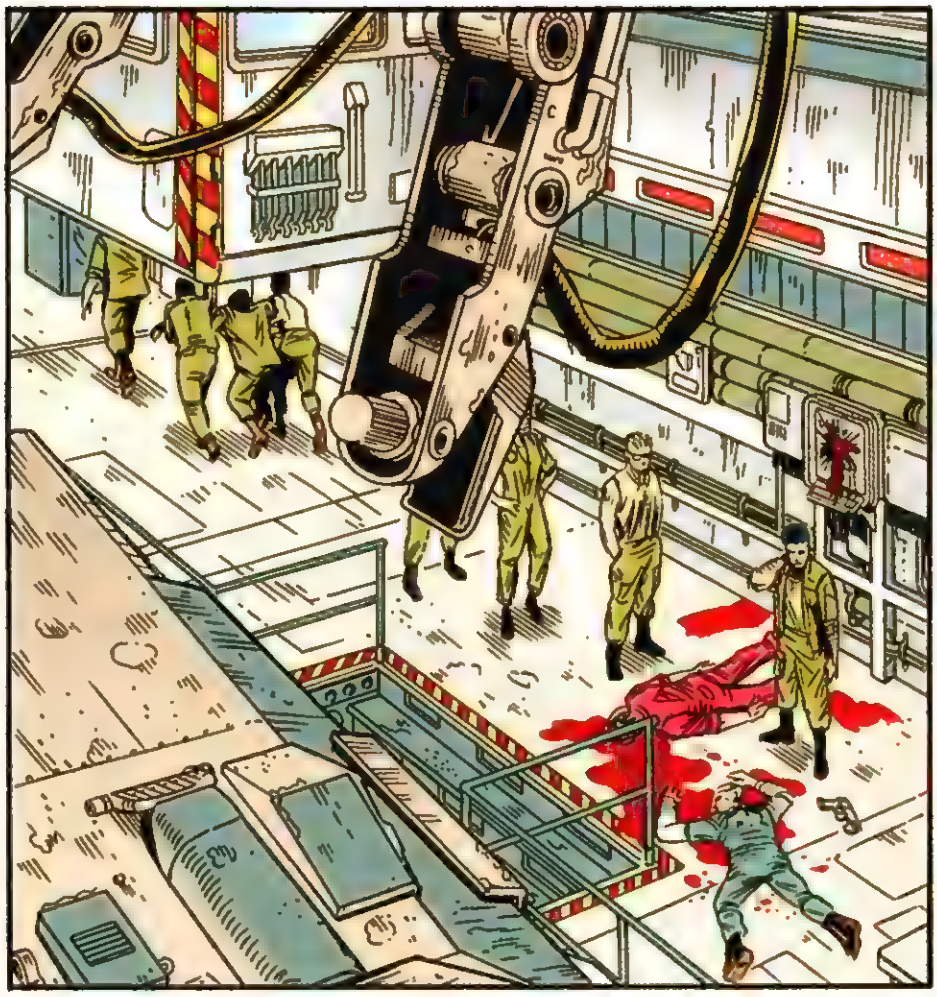
DAMN...
KRAK

...MONSTER... MONSTER JELLY... MONSTER...

...MONSTER JELLY...

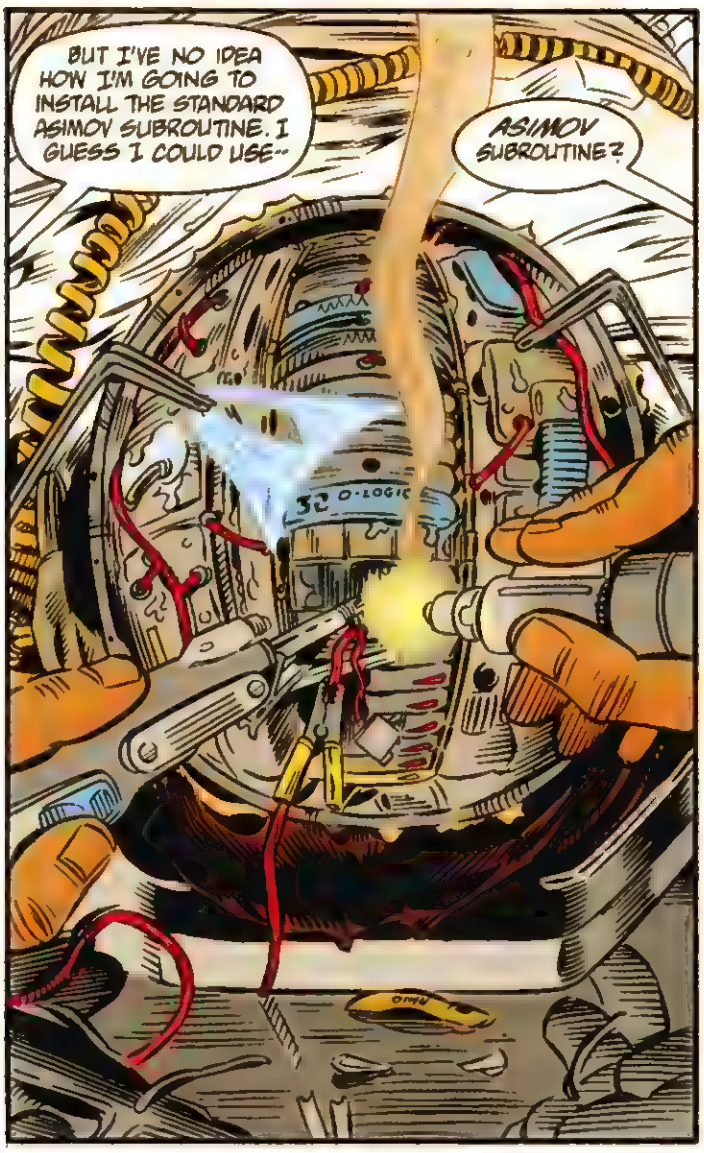
WHAT THE HELL'S GOING ON HERE, SOLDIER?! ANSWERS! NOW!
...GIVING THE MONSTER JELLY...

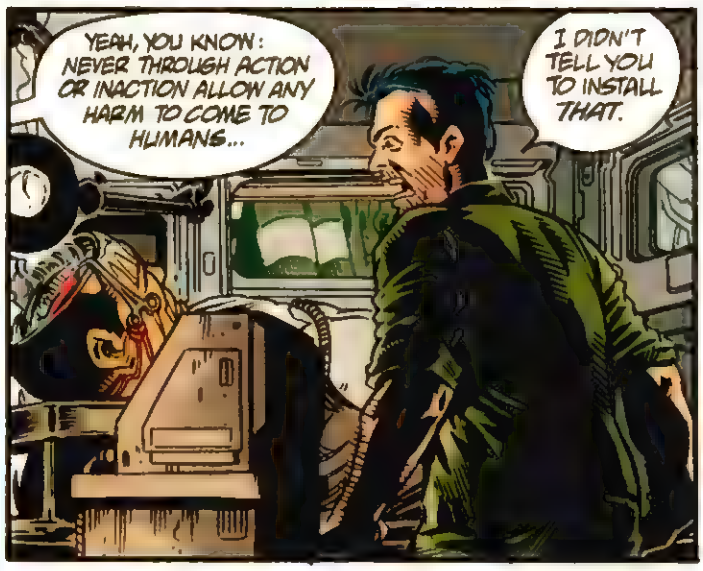

HE CAN'T HEAR YOU!
FOLLOW ME.

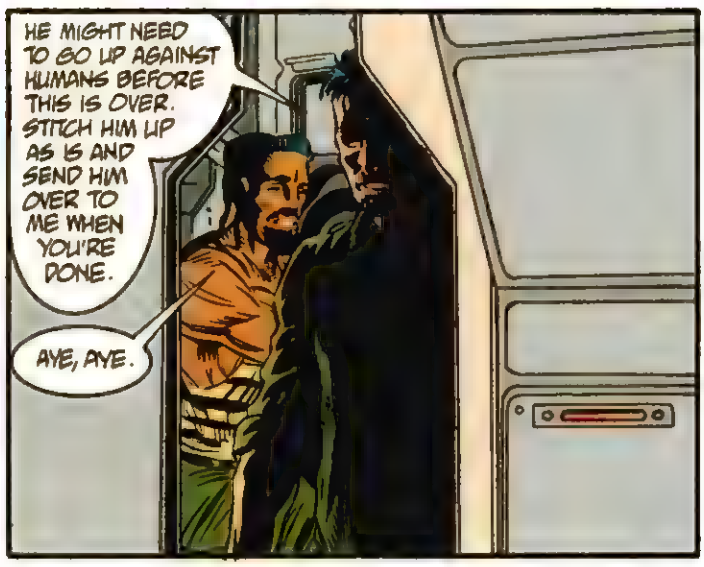


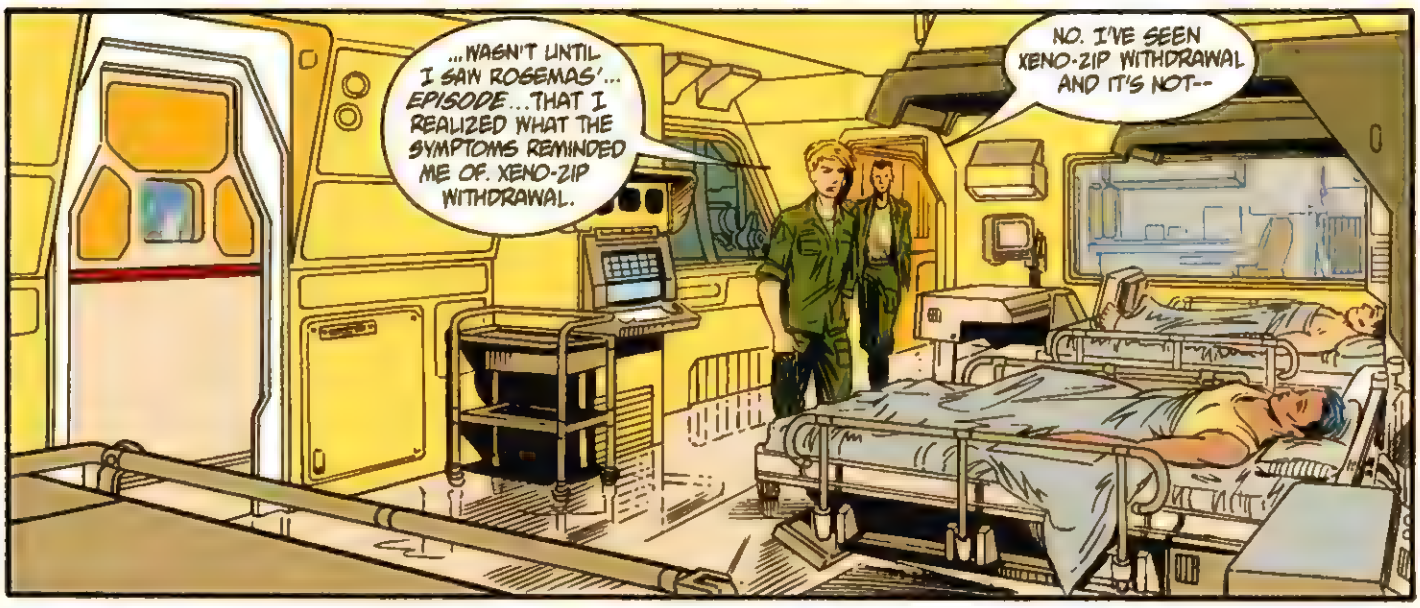
SHOW'S OVER. THIS MEETING RECONVENES RIGHT HERE IN TWO HOURS.
AND I WANT THIS AREA CLEANED UP BY THEN.

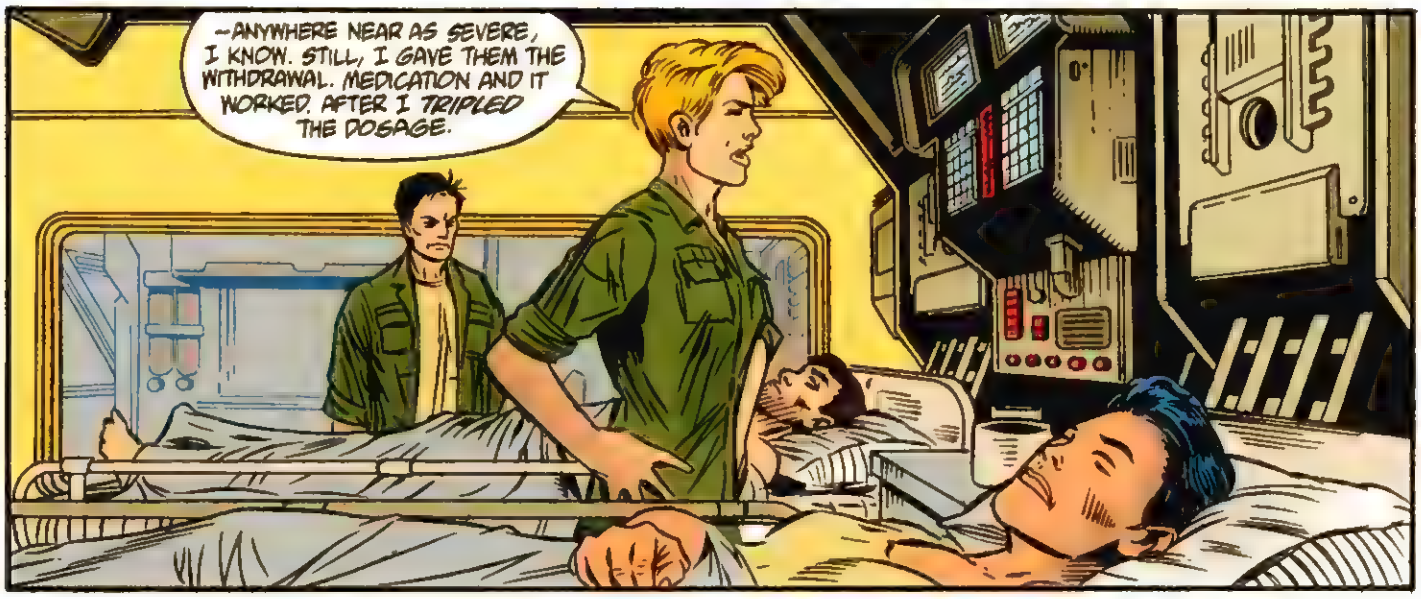
RAKE, WHAT'S YOUR STATUS?
WELL, I MANAGED TO REROUTE THE NEURAL PATHWAYS AROUND THE INHIBITIONARY SUBROUTINE THAT'S BEEN HOLDING OUR BOY BACK.


BUT I'VE NO IDEA HOW I'M GOING TO INSTALL THE STANDARD ASIMOV SUBROUTINE. I GUESS I COULD USE--
ASIMOV SUBROUTINE?


YEAH, YOU KNOW: NEVER THROUGH ACTION OR INACTION ALLOW ANY HARM TO COME TO HUMANS...
I DIDN'T TELL YOU TO INSTALL THAT.


HE MIGHT NEED TO GO UP AGAINST HUMANS BEFORE THIS IS OVER. STITCH HIM UP AS IS AND SEND HIM OVER TO ME WHEN YOU'RE DONE.
AYE, AYE.


...WASN'T UNTIL I SAW ROSEMAS'... EPISODE...THAT I REALIZED WHAT THE SYMPTOMS REMINDED ME OF. XENO-ZIP WITHDRAWAL.
NO. I'VE SEEN XENO-ZIP WITHDRAWAL AND IT'S NOT--


--ANYWHERE NEAR AS SEVERE, I KNOW. STILL, I GAVE THEM THE WITHDRAWAL. MEDICATION AND IT WORKED. AFTER I TRIPLED THE DOSAGE.

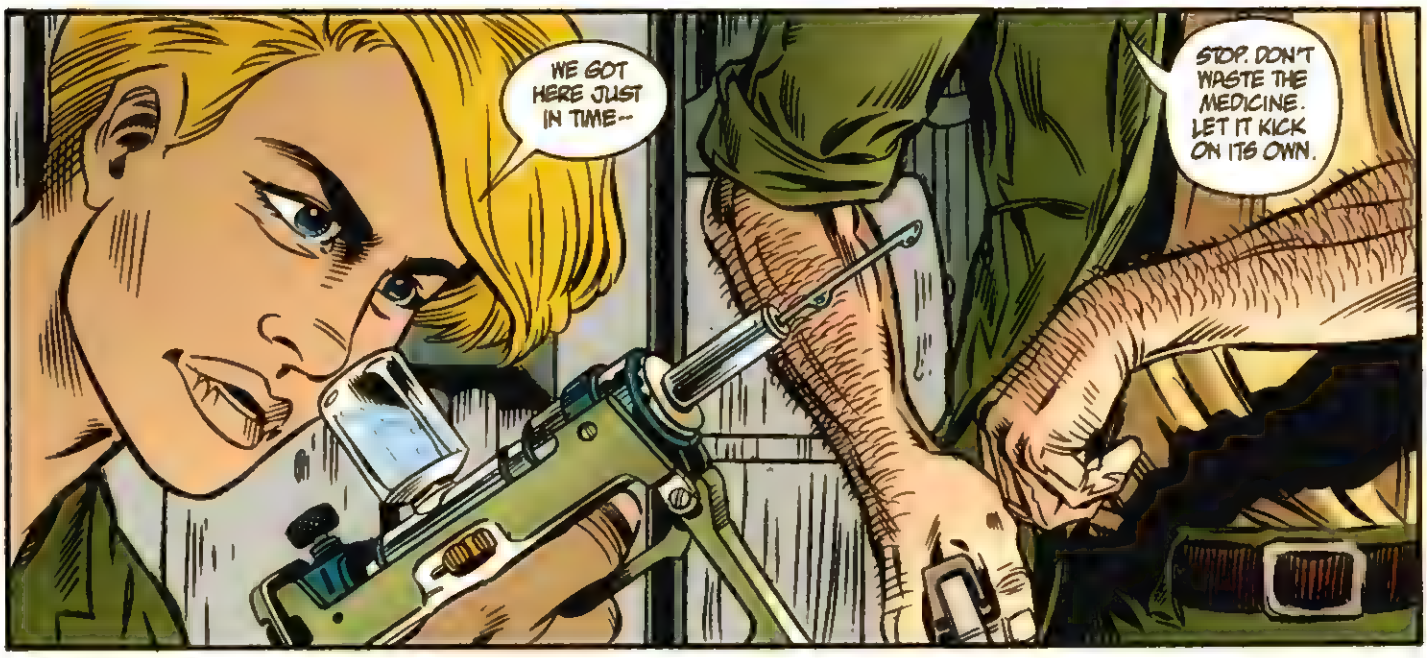
CHEN WENT RIGHT TO SLEEP, BUT ROSEMAS WAS LUCID FOR A MINUTE AND WE TALKED. IT WASN'T XENO-ZIP. THEY WERE ON ROYAL JELLY.

ROYAL JELLY?! WHERE THE HELL'D THEY GET...
DAMN!

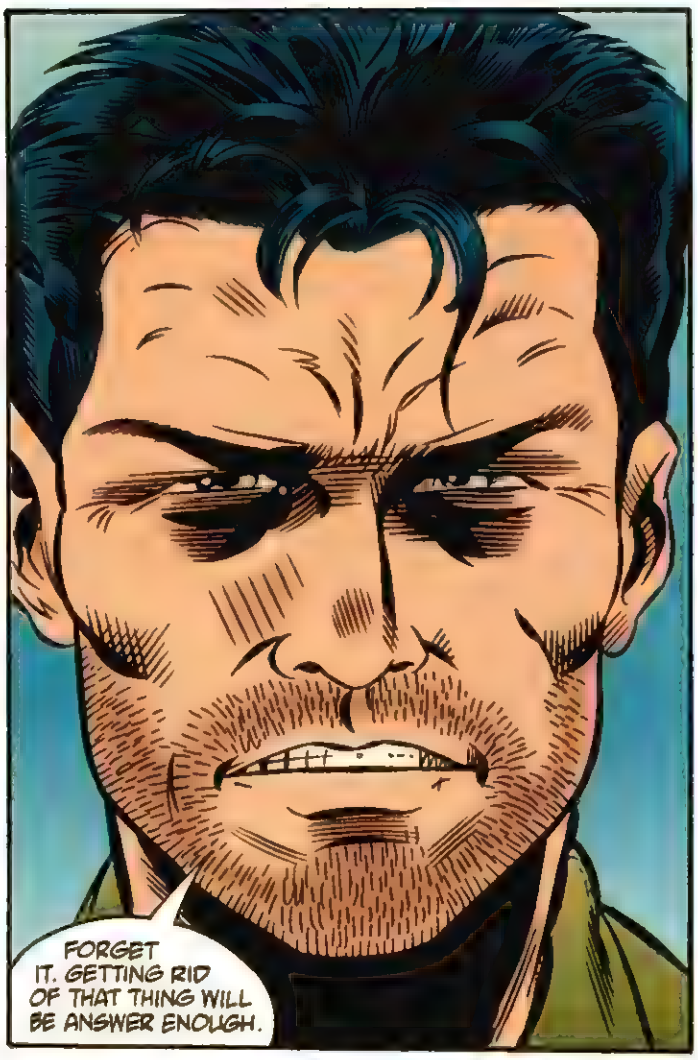
TALK, DAMMIT!
WHAK

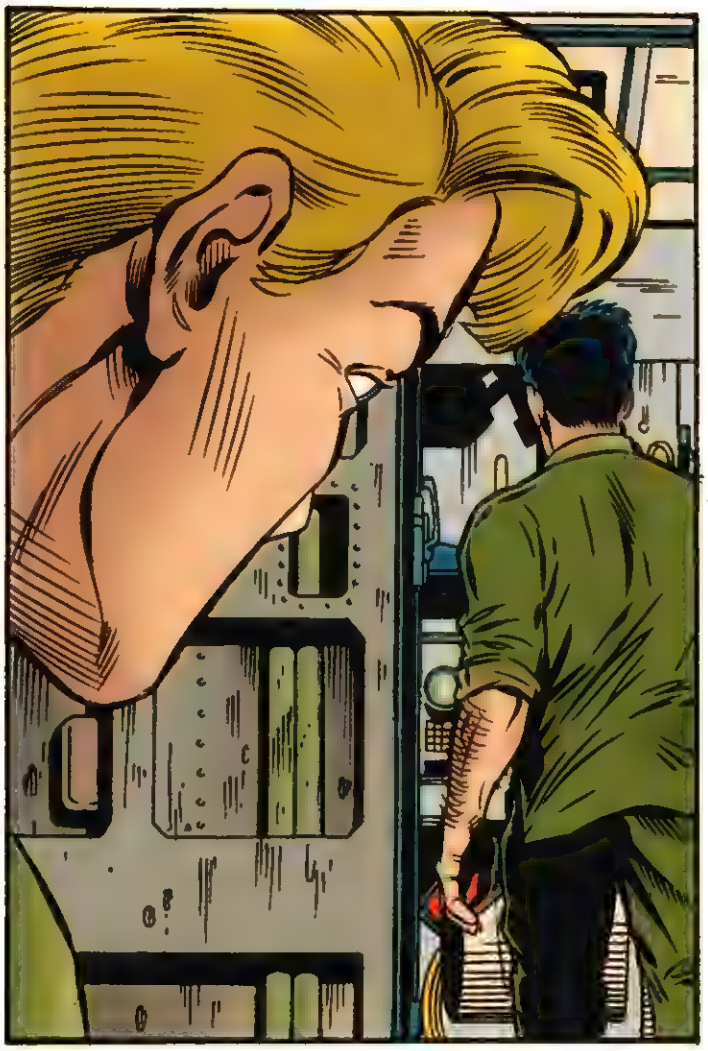
STAND IT BACK UP.
HOLD IT. HE'S NOT PLAYING TOUGH. I DON'T THINK HE KNOWS WE'RE HERE.

YOU MEAN THAT THING'S GOING THROUGH WITHDRAWAL, TOO?
HE SHOWS ALL THE SYMPTOMS, BUT MUCH WORSE. JESUS, IT'S AMAZING HE'S STILL ALIVE.
HENRY

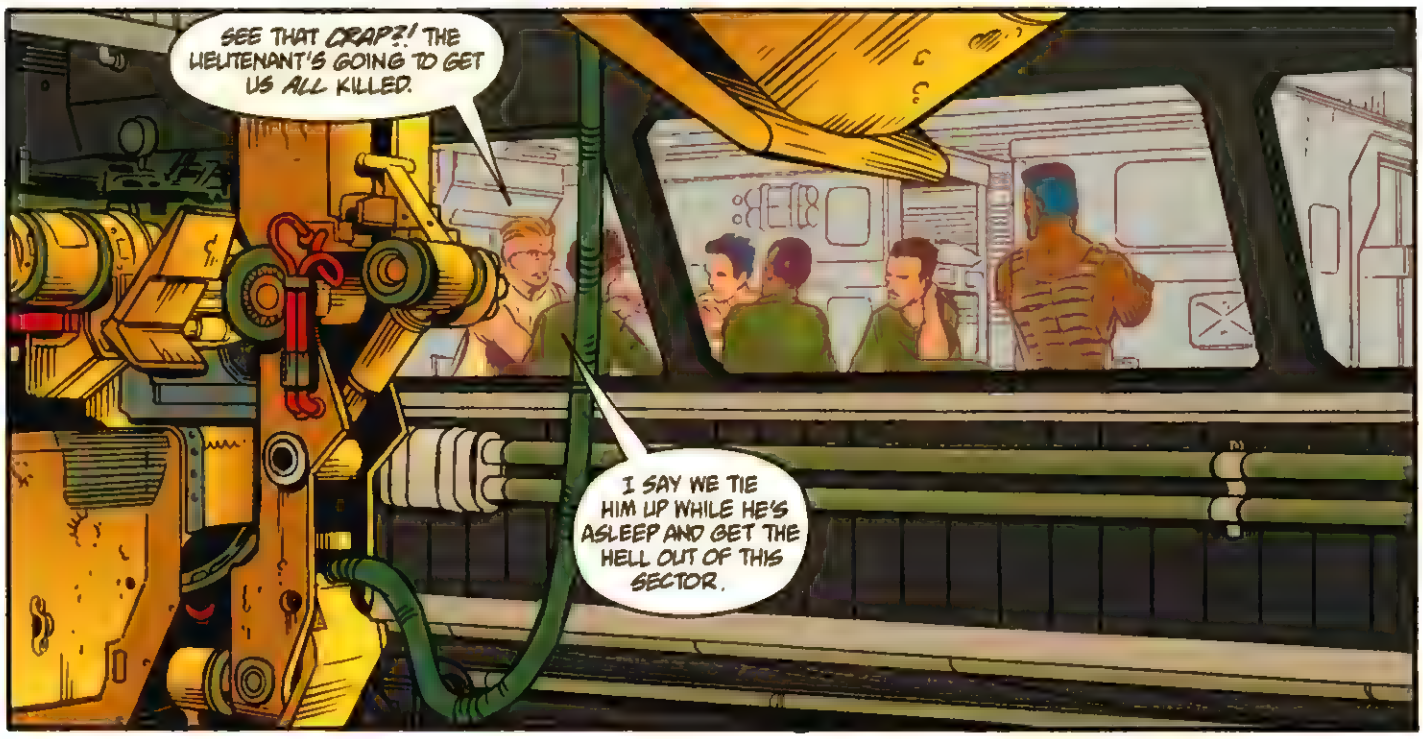

WE GOT HERE JUST IN TIME--
STOP. DON'T WASTE THE MEDICINE. LET IT KICK ON ITS OWN.

KICK?! LOOK, HE'S GOING TO ALTERNATE BETWEEN SCREAMING IN PAIN AND DELUSIONAL EPISODES FOR A FEW DAYS AND THEN HE'S GOING TO DIE.
WITHOUT THIS MEDICINE YOU WON'T GET ANY ANSWERS.

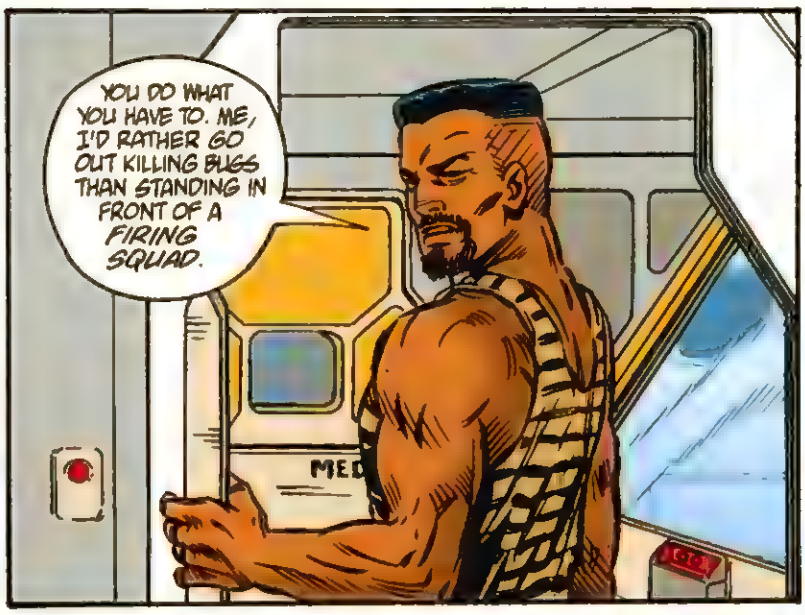

FORGET IT. GETTING RID OF THAT THING WILL BE ANSWER ENOUGH.

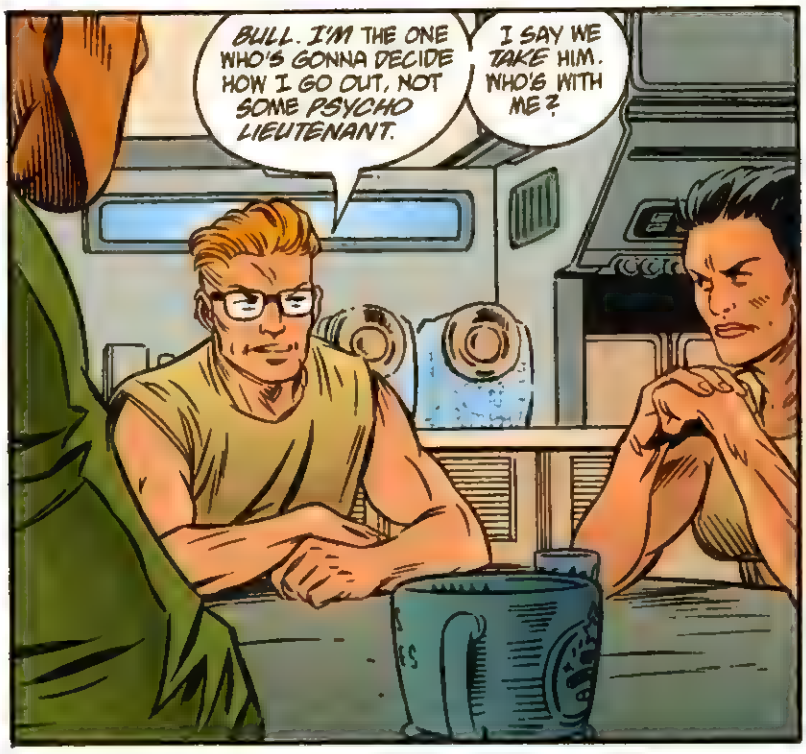


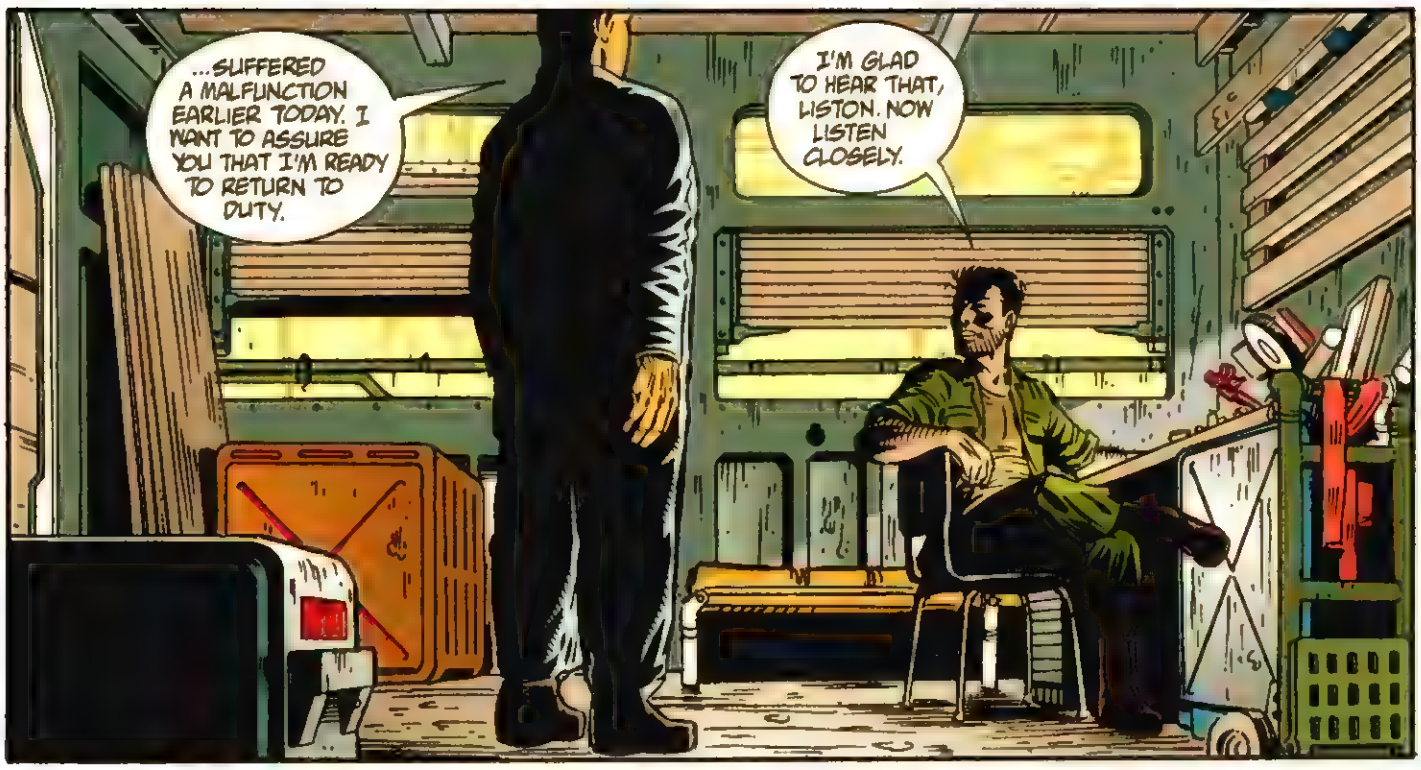
MAYBE FOR HIM IT'S ENOUGH...


SEE THAT CRAP?! THE LIEUTENANT'S GOING TO GET US ALL KILLED.
I SAY WE TIE HIM UP WHILE HE'S ASLEEP AND GET THE HELL OUT OF THIS SECTOR.

ONCE WE'RE BACK IN THE CORE SYSTEMS WE CAN GET THESE DAMN BOMBS REMOVED--
AND THEN WE CAN GET COURT-MARTIALED FOR MUTINY AND THEN WE CAN GET SHOT.
USCM 135-0163


YOU DO WHAT YOU HAVE TO. ME, I'D RATHER GO OUT KILLING BUGS THAN STANDING IN FRONT OF A FIRING SQUAD.


BULL. I'M THE ONE WHO'S GONNA DECIDE HOW I GO OUT, NOT SOME PSYCHO LIEUTENANT.
I SAY WE TAKE HIM. WHO'S WITH ME?


...SUFFERED A MALFUNCTION EARLIER TODAY. I WANT TO ASSURE YOU THAT I'M READY TO RETURN TO DUTY.
I'M GLAD TO HEAR THAT, LISTON. NOW LISTEN CLOSELY.

AS YOUR COMMANDING OFFICER, I ORDER YOU TO AIM THIS GUN AT YOUR HEAD AND PULL THE TRIGGER.
YES, SIR.

CLIK

WELL DONE, LISTON. NOW I WANT YOU TO TELL ME THE *REAL* REASON YOU WERE ASSIGNED TO THIS MISSION.
IN *EXHAUSTIVE* DETAIL.

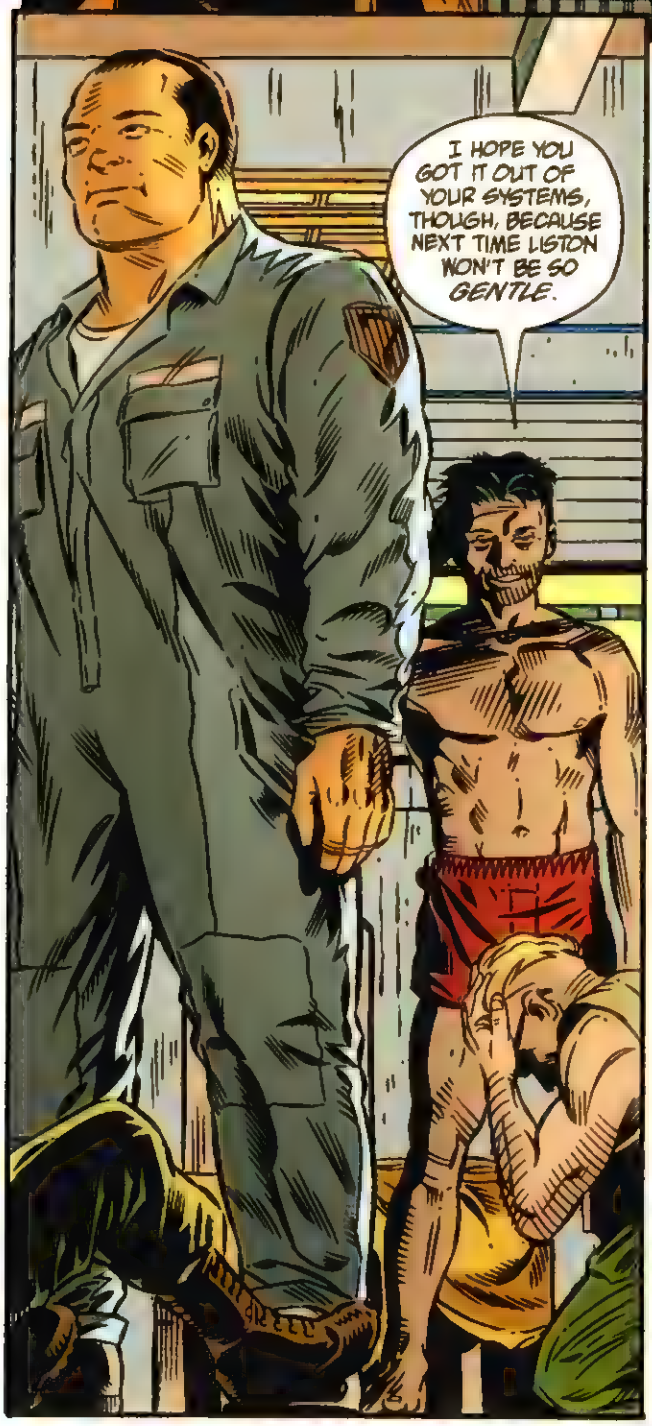
CEREBUS SYSTEM, 03:28 HOURS.
...QUICK AND SILENT. GOT IT?

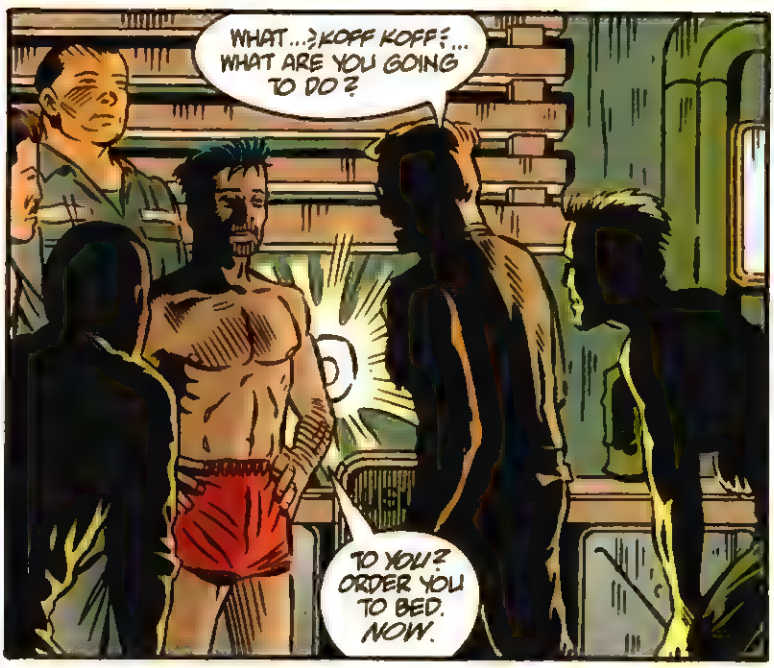
LIGHTS OUT.

I.R. GOGGLES ON.

EVERY-BODY'S WORKING?
LET'S DO THIS.

ABOUT TIME YOU GOT UP THE BALLS TO TRY SOMETHING LIKE THIS.
LET HIM GO, LISTON.

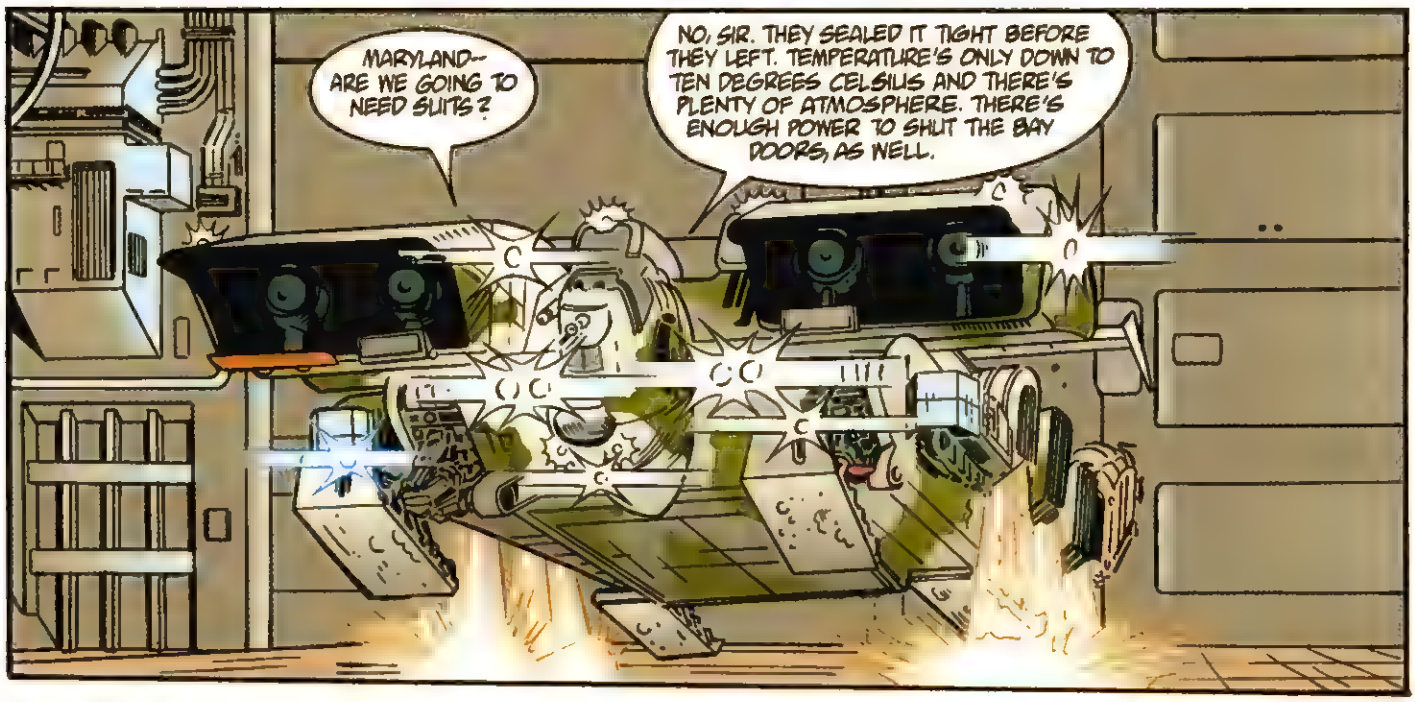

I HOPE YOU GOT IT OUT OF YOUR SYSTEMS, THOUGH, BECAUSE NEXT TIME LISTON WON'T BE SO GENTLE.

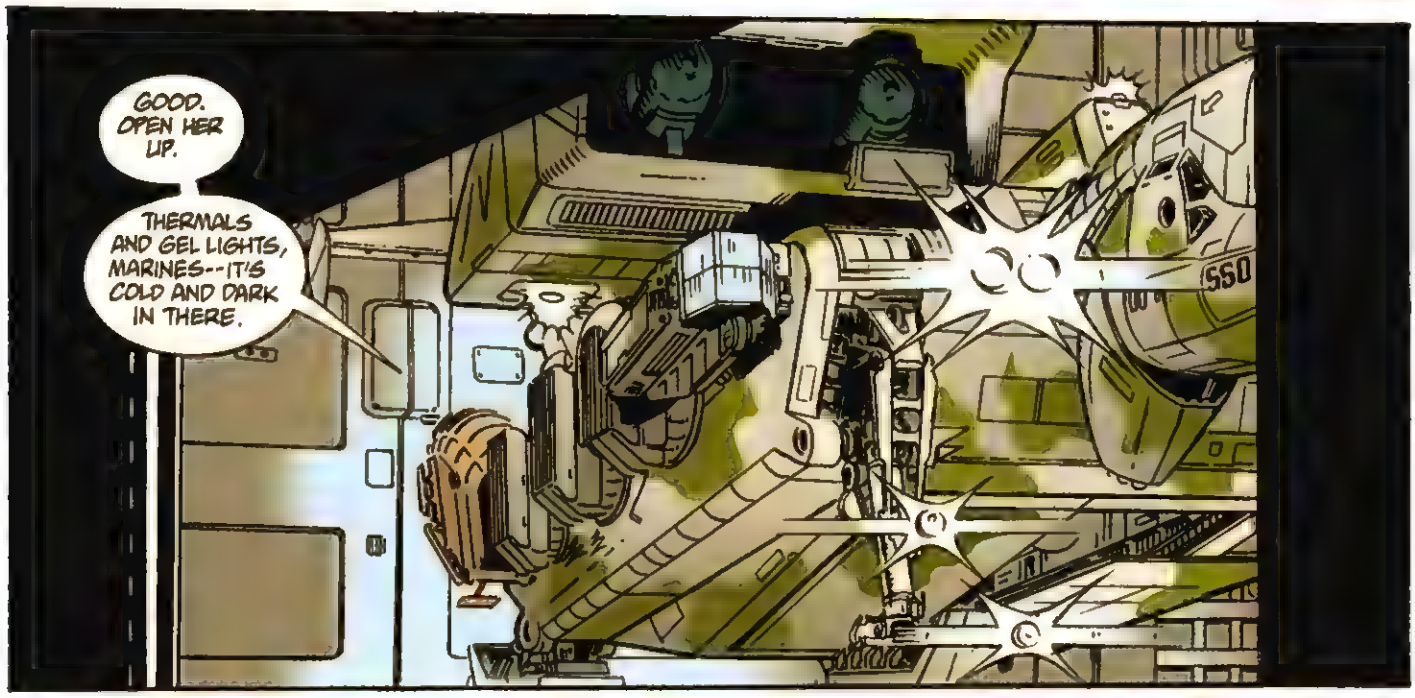

WHAT...? KOFF KOFF?... WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO?
TO YOU? ORDER YOU TO BED. NOW.

I TOLD LISTON NOT TO BREAK ANY BONES, BUT I'M SURE YOU'LL WANT A GOOD NIGHT'S SLEEP BEFORE TOMORROW'S OP.
PLEASANT DREAMS, MARINES.

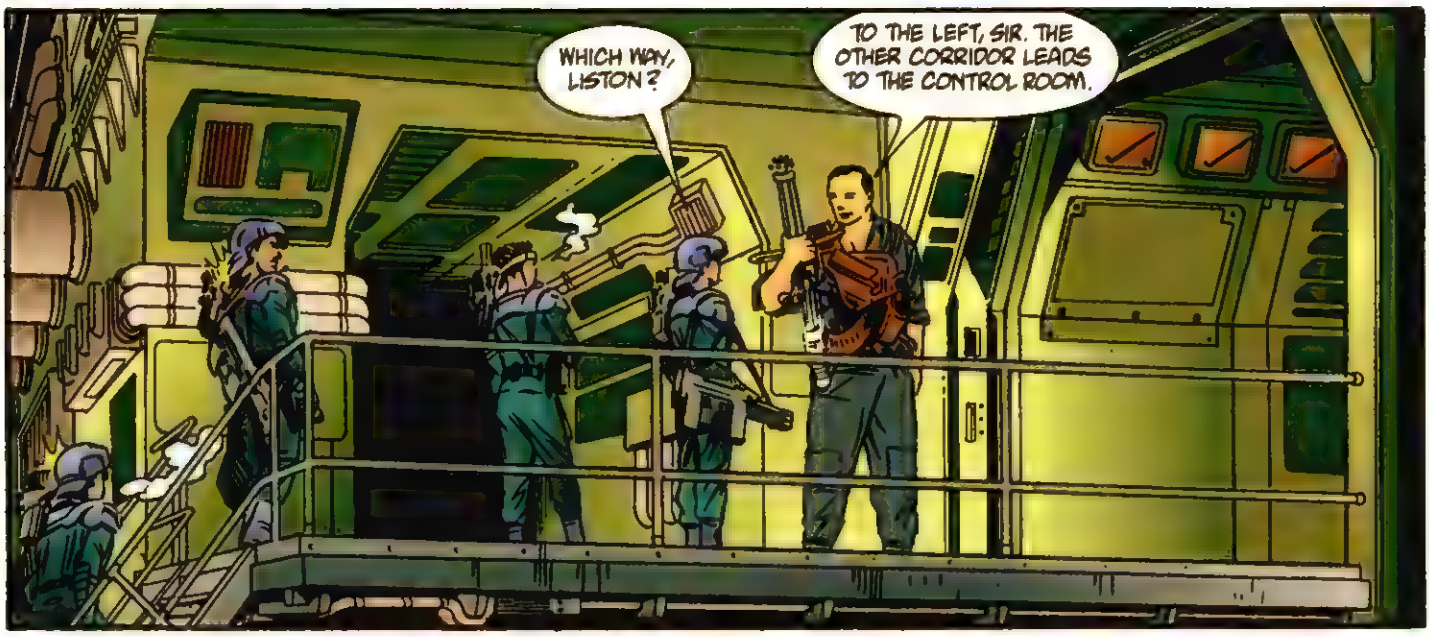
ALPHATECH RESEARCH STATION #2378, 11:00 HOURS.
I'M GETTING MINIMAL ENERGY READINGS, LIEUTENANT. NO LIFE SUPPORT. THIS STATION IS DEAD.
GOOD. SET US DOWN IN THE MIDDLE BAY AND KEEP SCANNING. I DON'T WANT ANY SURPRISES.

CHECK THOSE READINGS, LISTON. CAN YOU GET THEIR LAB COMPUTERS UP WITH THAT MUCH POWER?
YES, SIR, BUT JUST BARELY. I SUGGEST WE LEAVE ALL OTHER SYSTEMS OFF.

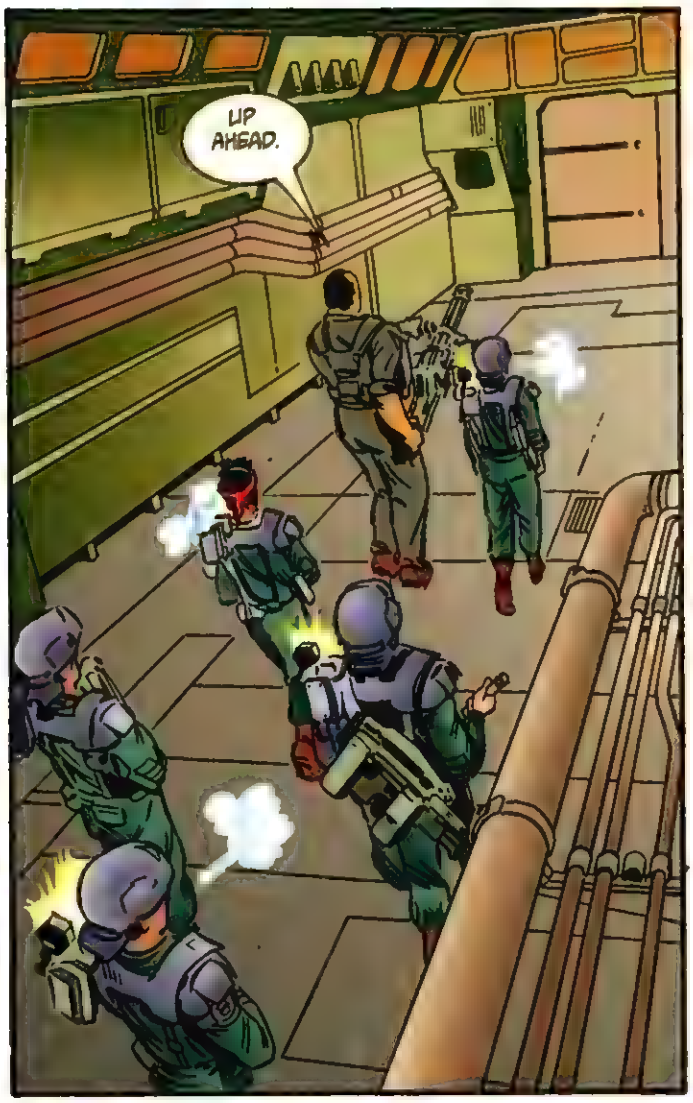

MARYLAND--ARE WE GOING TO NEED SUITS?
NO, SIR. THEY SEALED IT TIGHT BEFORE THEY LEFT. TEMPERATURE'S ONLY DOWN TO TEN DEGREES CELSIUS AND THERE'S PLENTY OF ATMOSPHERE. THERE'S ENOUGH POWER TO SHUT THE BAY DOORS, AS WELL.

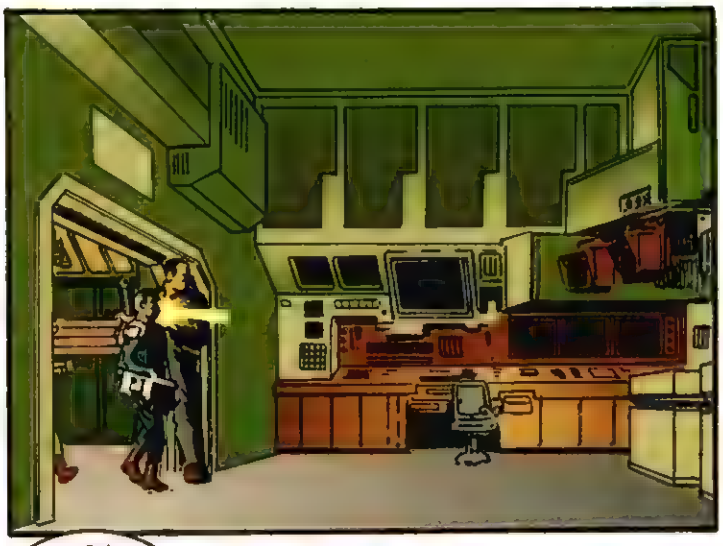

GOOD. OPEN HER UP.
THERMALS AND GEL LIGHTS, MARINES--IT'S COLD AND DARK IN THERE.

PLACE IS LIKE A MEAT LOCKER.
WITH UNRECYCLED AIR. GOTTA LOVE IT.


WHICH WAY, LISTON?
TO THE LEFT, SIR. THE OTHER CORRIDOR LEADS TO THE CONTROL ROOM.

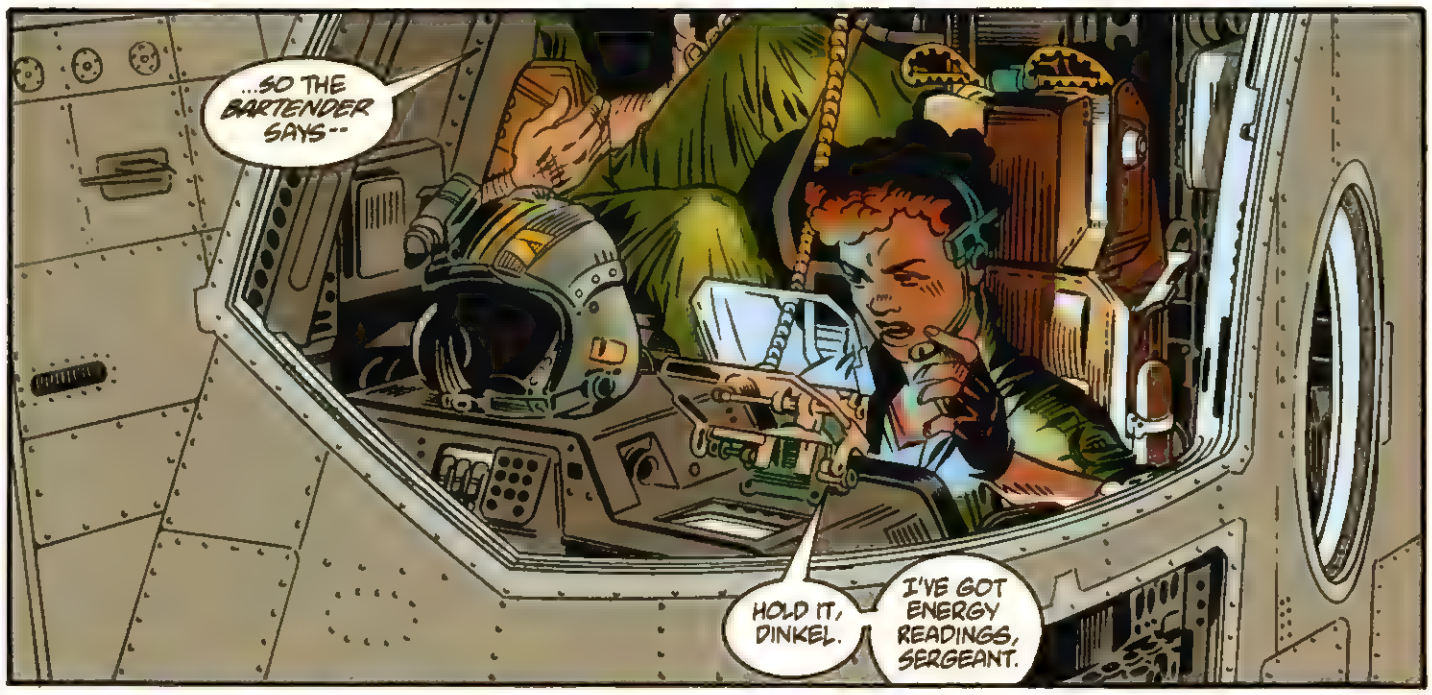
HOW LONG WE BEEN IN HERE? DIDN'T LOOK THIS BIG FROM THE OUTSIDE.


UP AHEAD.

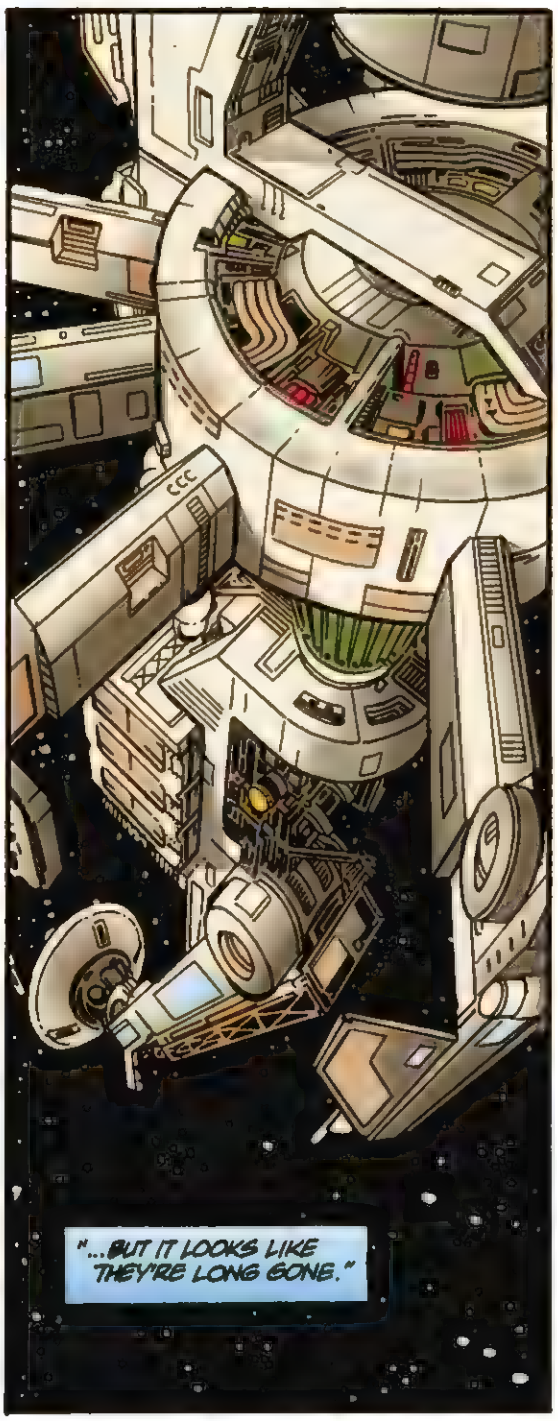


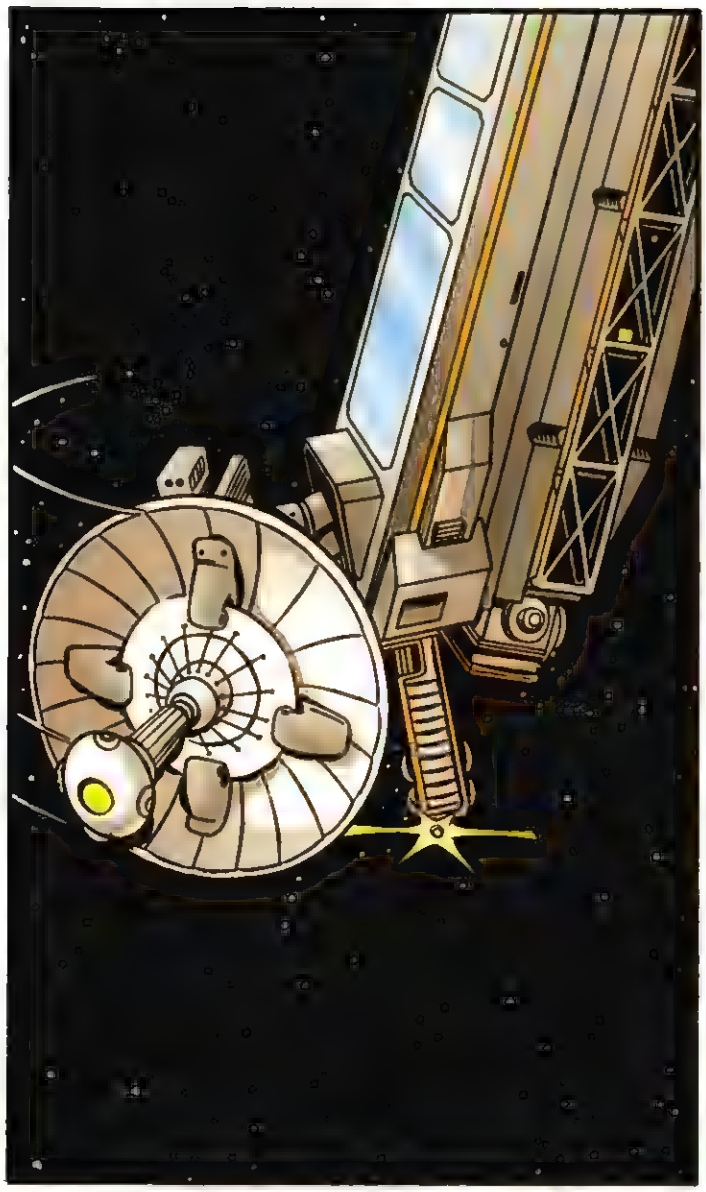
HEY, SARGE. THIS WAS A RESEARCH LAB, RIGHT?

WHAT THE HELL WERE THEY RESEARCHING?


...SO THE BARTENDER SAYS--
HOLD IT, DINKEL.
I'VE GOT ENERGY READINGS, SERGEANT.

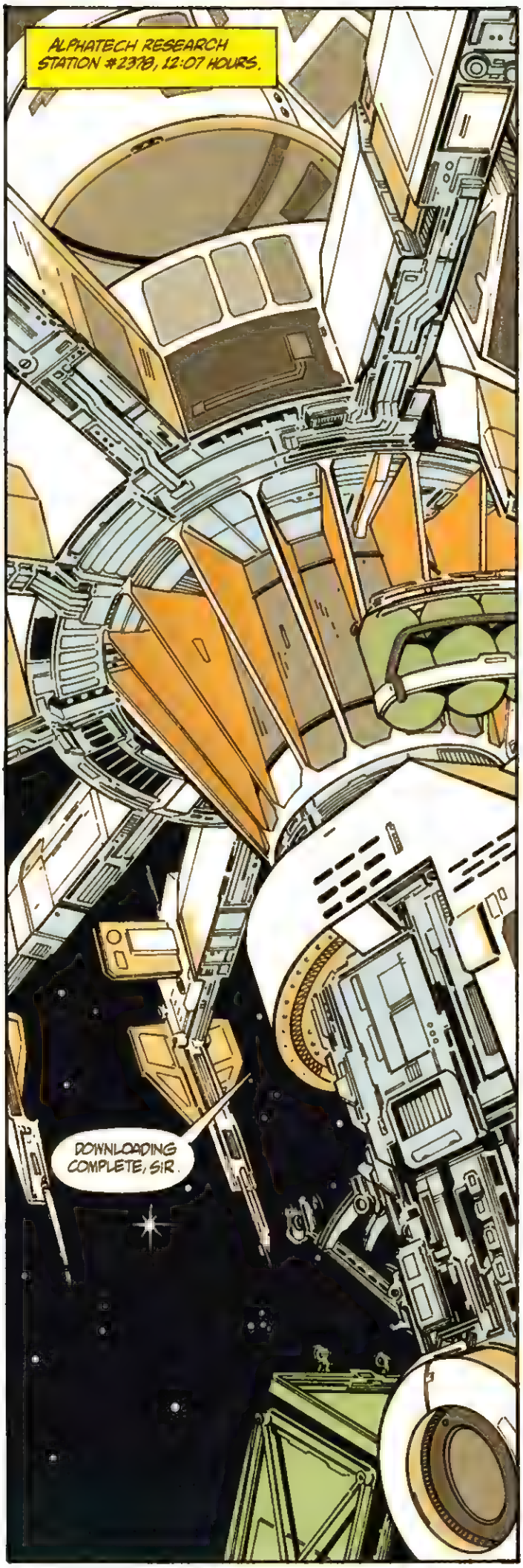
SCANS JUST TOOK A BIG JUMP--
RELAX, MARYLAND. LISTON JUST POWERED UP THE COMPUTER. THERE USED TO BE AN ARMY OF BUGS HERE...


"...BUT IT LOOKS LIKE THEY'RE LONG GONE."



INCOMING MESSAGE FROM RESEARCH STATION PRIME, REVEREND FATHER.
ON MY SCREEN.

FATHER_
THE HEATHENS HAVE ARRIVED_
BLESS YOU, MY SON. BLESS YOU.

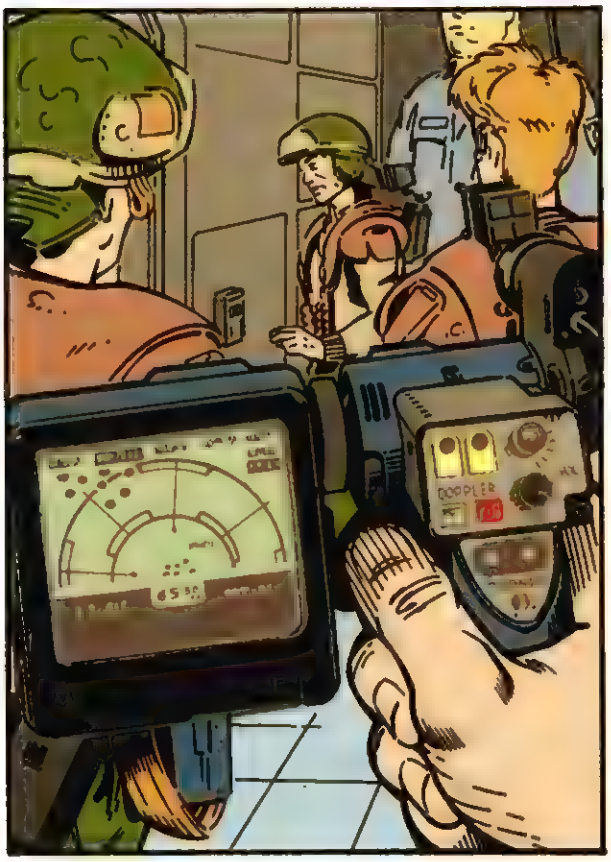

ALPHATECH RESEARCH STATION #2378, 12:07 HOURS.
DOWNLOADING COMPLETE, SIR.

I AM PROCESSING THE INFORMATION NOW. COMPLETE ANALYSIS AVAILABLE IN... FIFTEEN SECONDS.

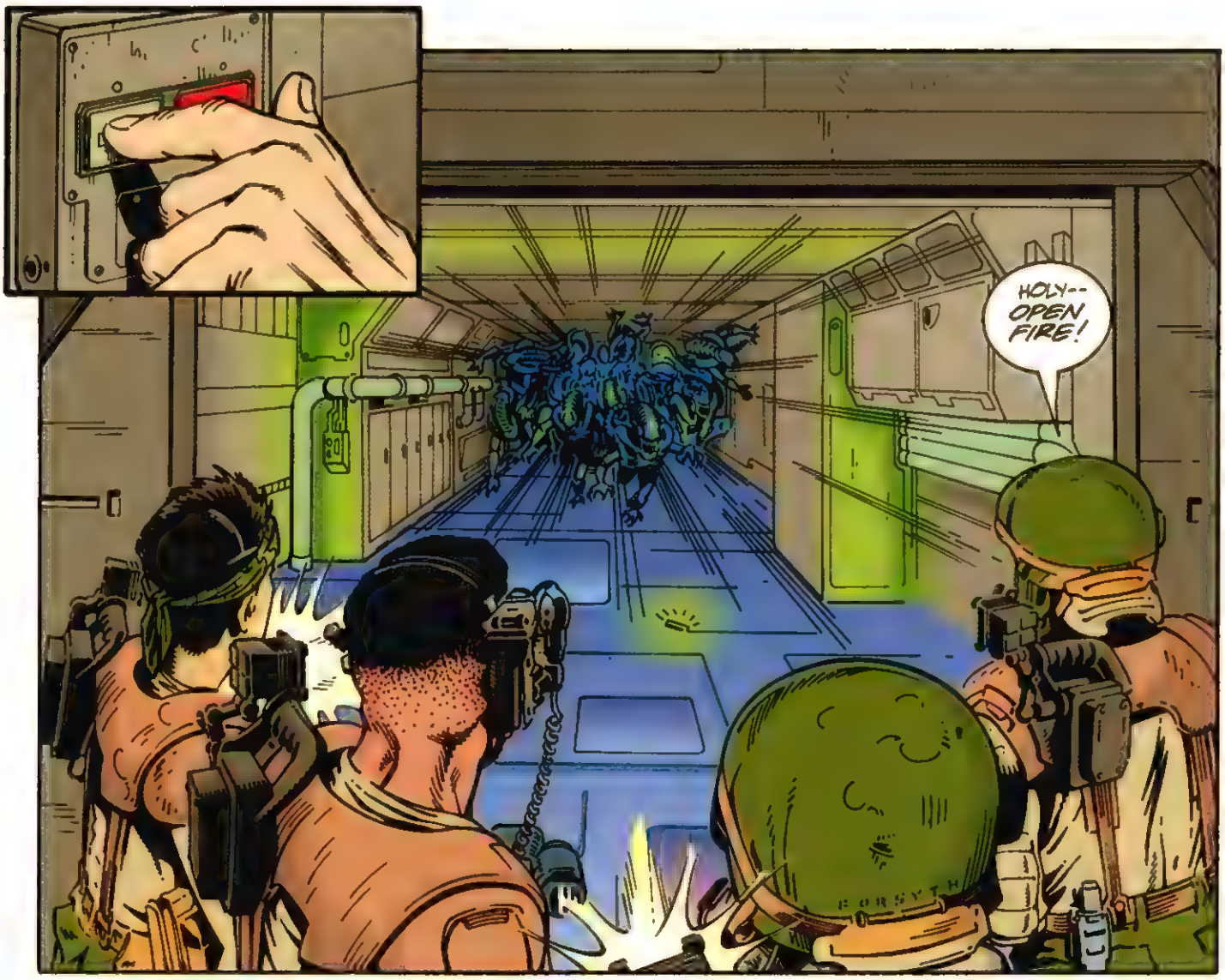
SAVE IT. THIS PLACE IS MAKING ME JUMPY.

ALL RIGHT, LADIES, WE GOT WHAT WE CAME FOR. LET'S GET BACK TO THE SHIP.

HMM...?


DOPPLER

LIEUTENANT! I'VE GOT MOVEM--
+!

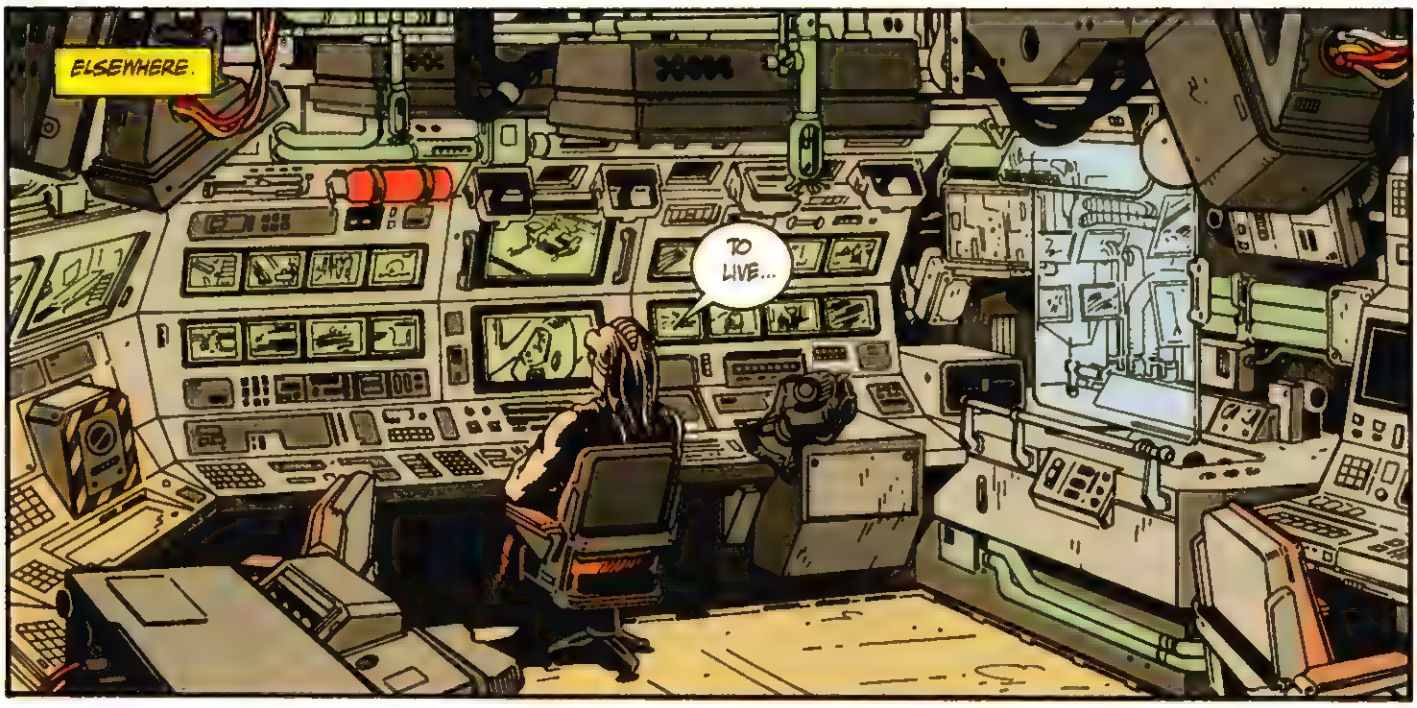

HOLY-- OPEN FIRE!

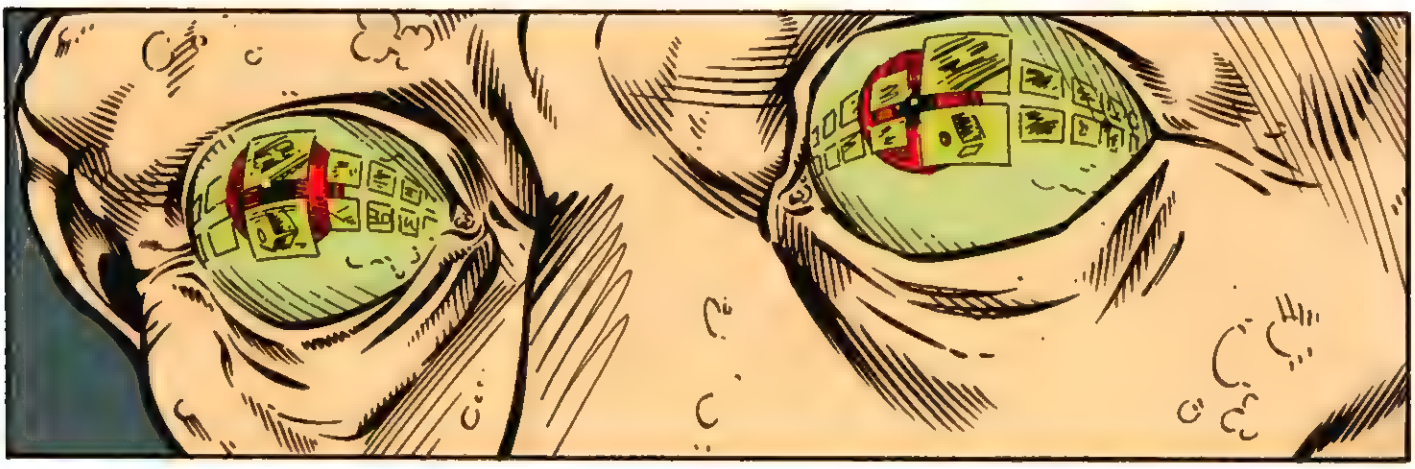
ACTUALLY, IF YOU HOLD YOUR FIRE --

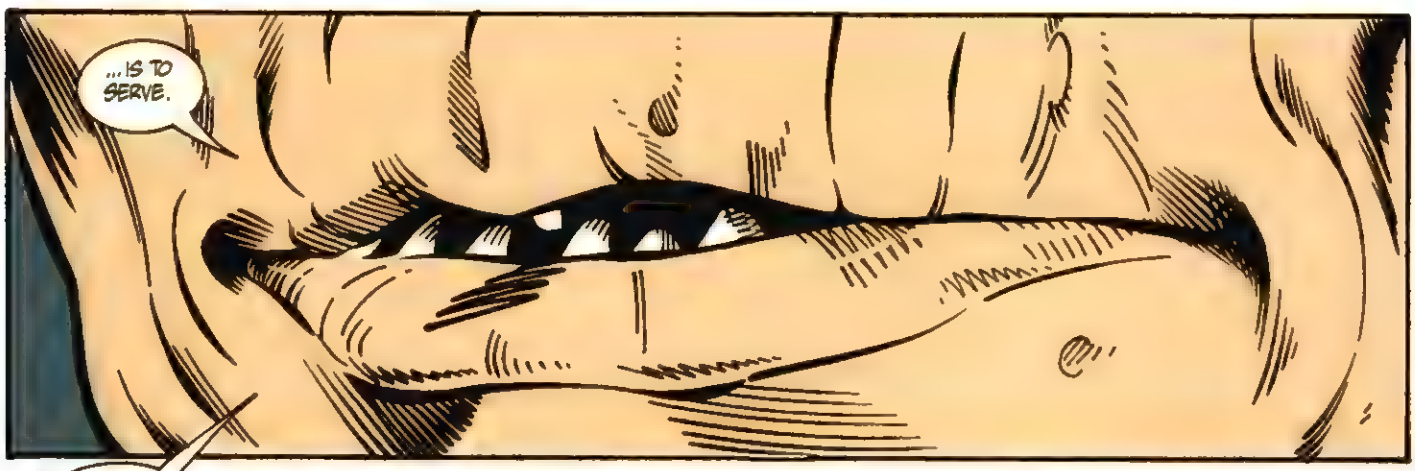
--AND ALLOW ME...

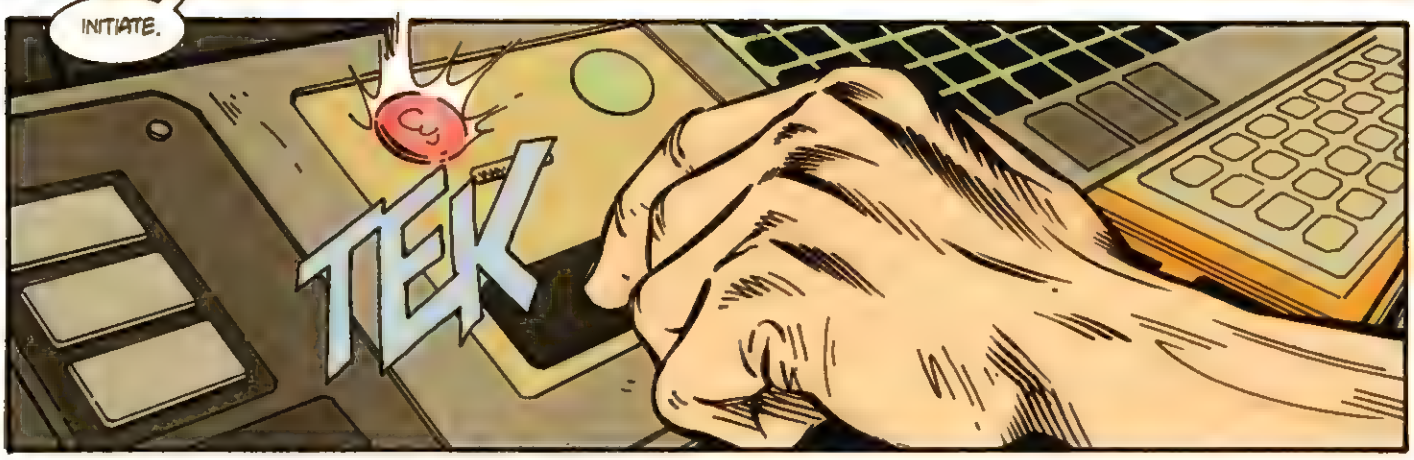
I CAN...
...DO THE JOB...
...MUCH MORE...
...EFFICIENTLY MYSELF.
I CAN'T BELIE--HE WAS BLOODY WELL DESIGNED FOR THIS!

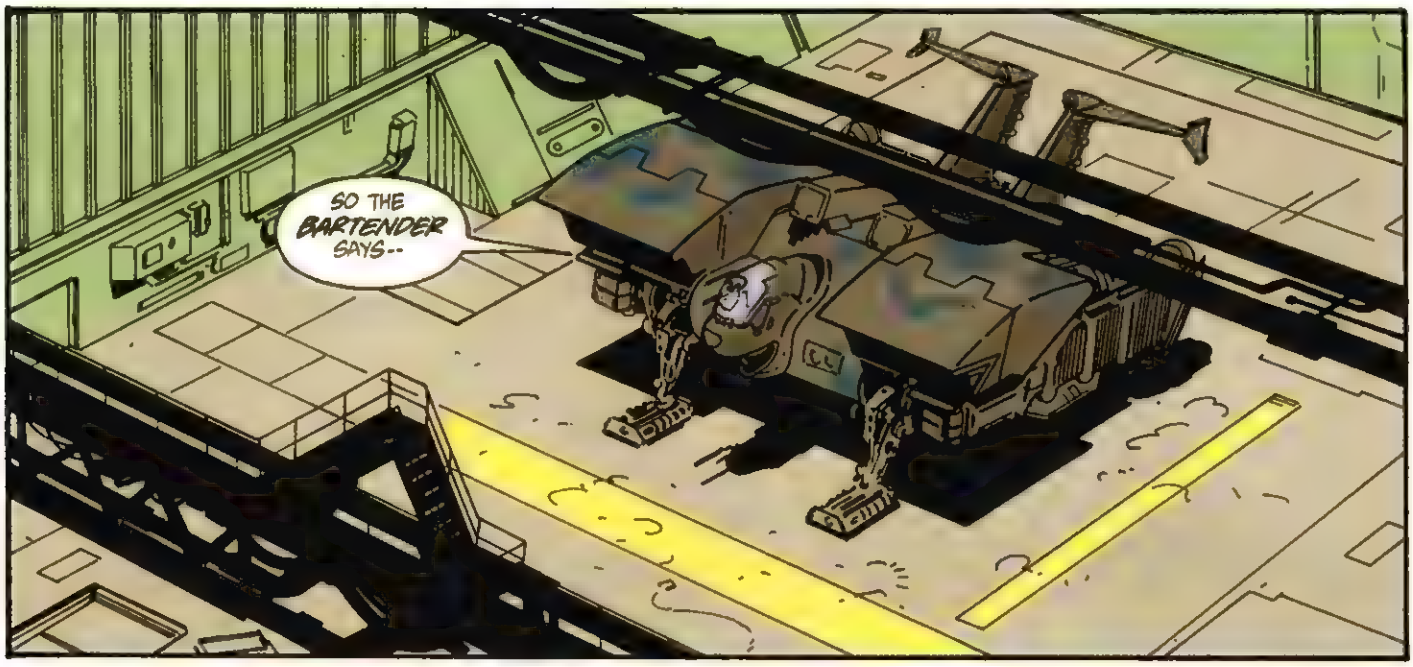
ALL RIGHT, HE'S CLEARING THE WAY FOR US! LET'S MOVE!
HE'S GOT THE INTERSECTION SECURED!
WHAT THE HELL IS THAT STUFF?
BASE COMPOUND. COUNTERACTIVE TO XENOMORPH ACID. EXUDED FROM MODIFIED SWEAT GLANDS.
IT'S IN MY DESIGN SPECS.
AMONG OTHER THINGS.


ELSEWHERE.
TO LIVE...



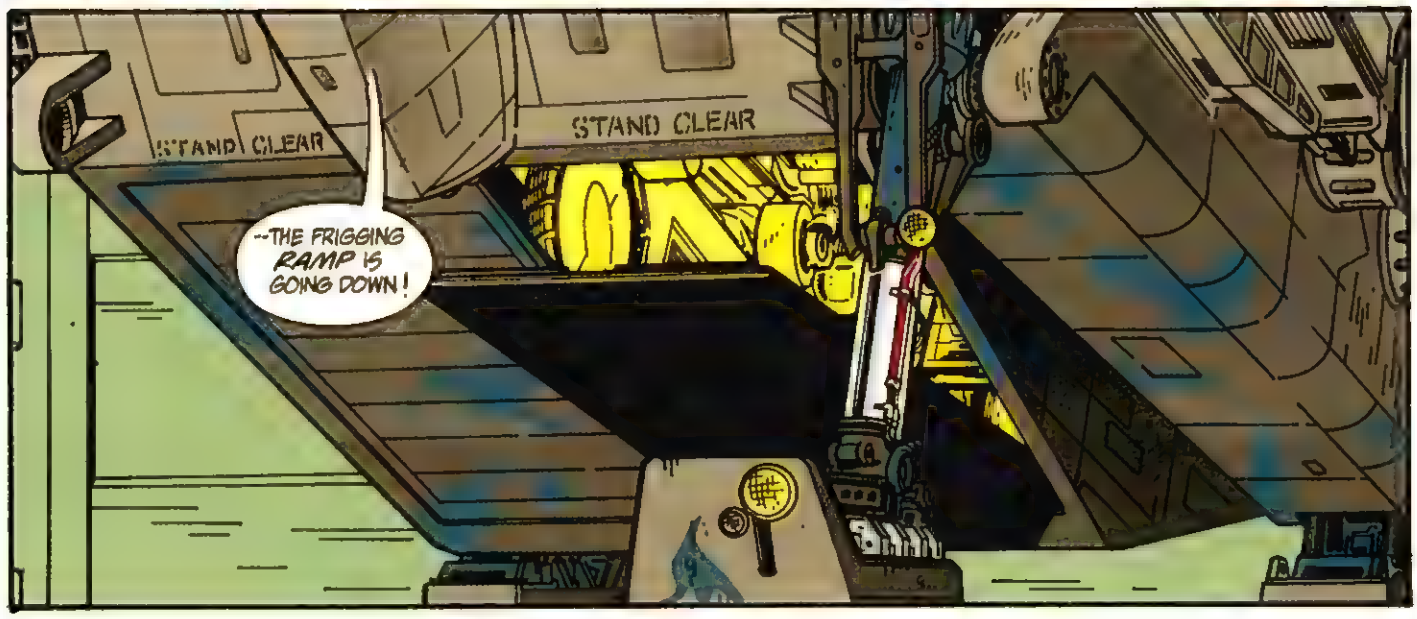

...IS TO SERVE.


INITIATE.
TEK


SO THE BARTENDER SAYS--

--NO, MAN, MY BUG'S AT HOME!
DINKEL, GIVEN THE SITUATION, I HARDLY THINK HUMOR IS APPROPR--HEY!
BREEP-BREEP

WE'RE SHUTTING DOWN!
POWER LOSS TO PRIMARY SYSTEMS, AND--

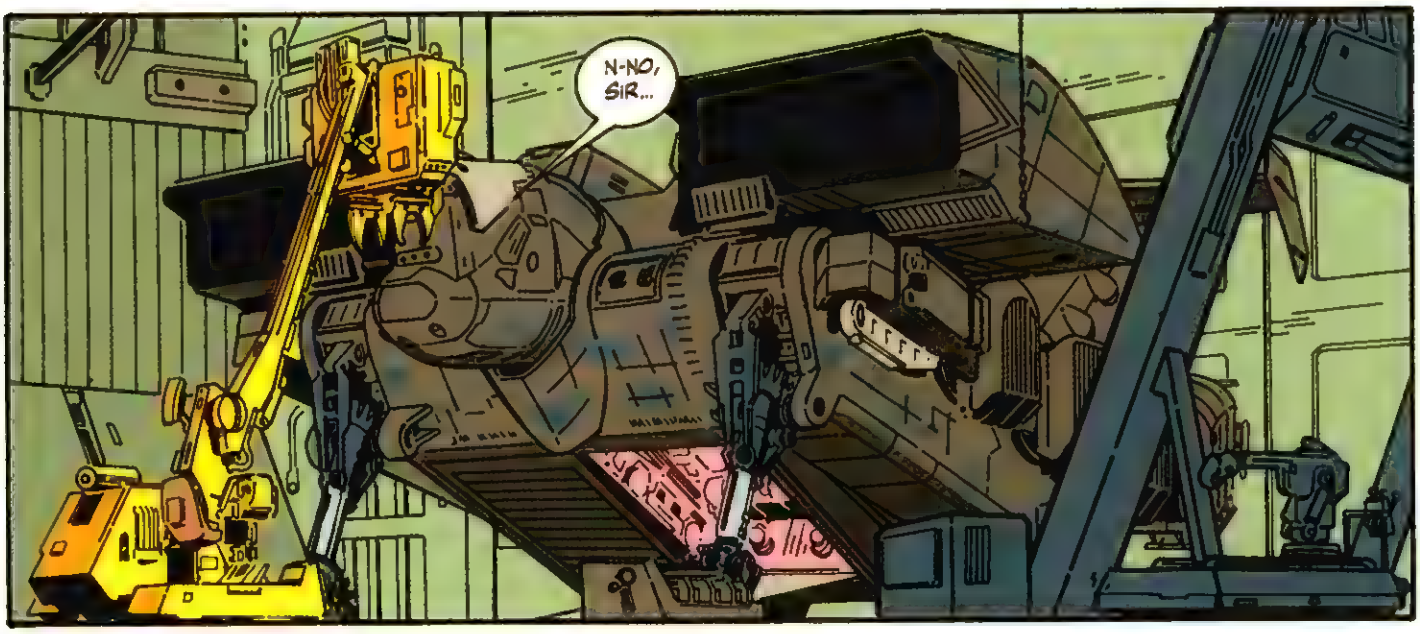

STAND CLEAR
STAND CLEAR
--THE FRIGGING RAMP IS GOING DOWN!

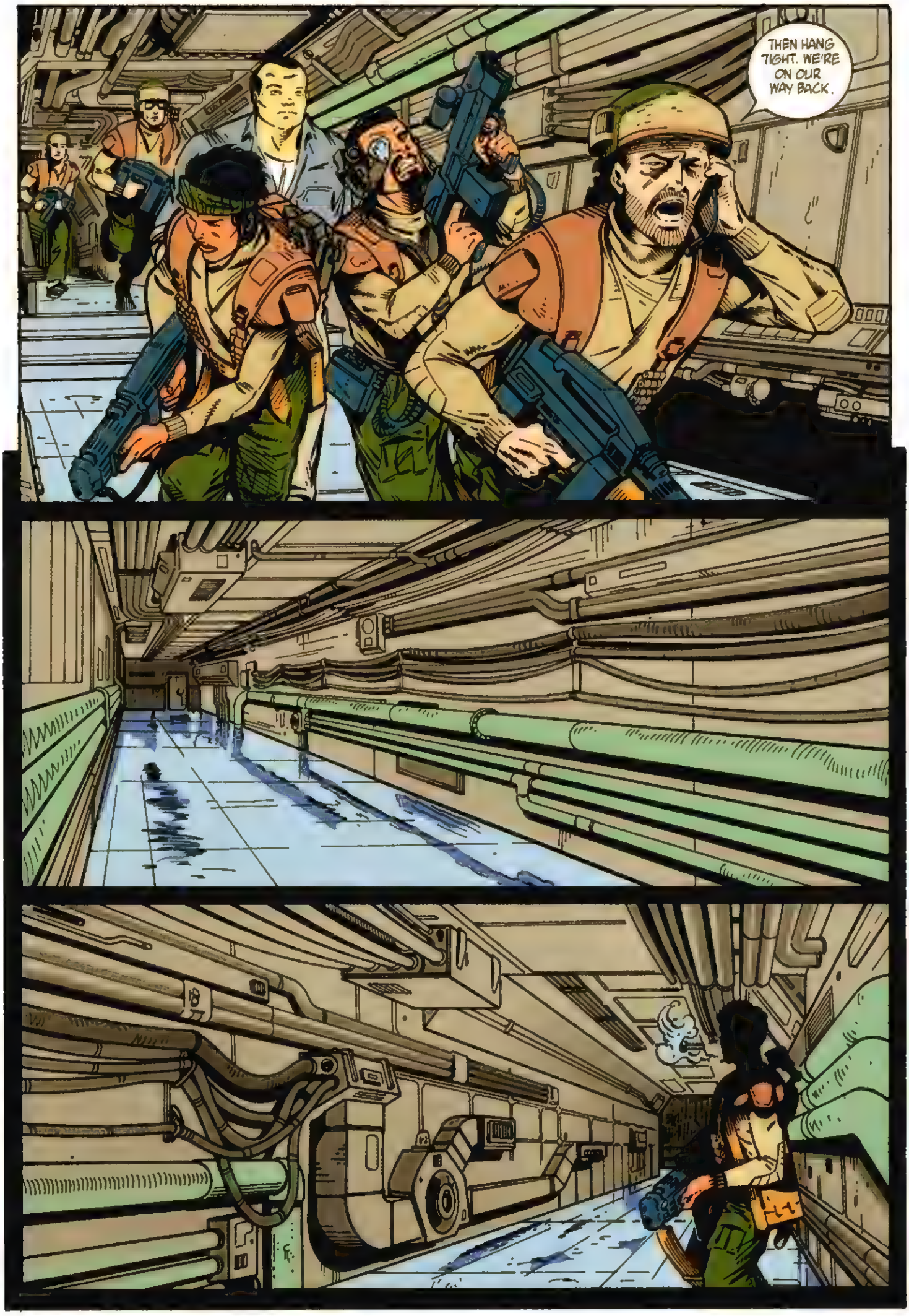
ALL RIGHT, LISTON, THAT'S GOOD ENOUGH. FALL BACK AND STAY BY ME.
BEGGIN' YOUR PARDON, SIR, BUT THE BUGS ARE ONLY COMING IN SHORT WAVES. WITH LISTON ON POINT, WE'RE FREE AND CLEAR.
NO, WITH LISTON ON POINT WE'VE GOT A GOOD CHANCE OF HITTING HIM IF WE HAVE TO FIRE. WE CAN HANDLE NUMBERS THIS LOW OURSELVES.
BUT SIR--
END OF DISCUSSION, PRIVATE. LISTON STAYS WITH ME.

LIEUTENANT! DO YOU COPY?

LIEUTENANT, WE'VE LOST POWER! ALL SYSTEMS ARE DOWN, AND I CAN'T TRACE THE CAUSE!

ANY MOVEMENT AT YOUR POSITION?

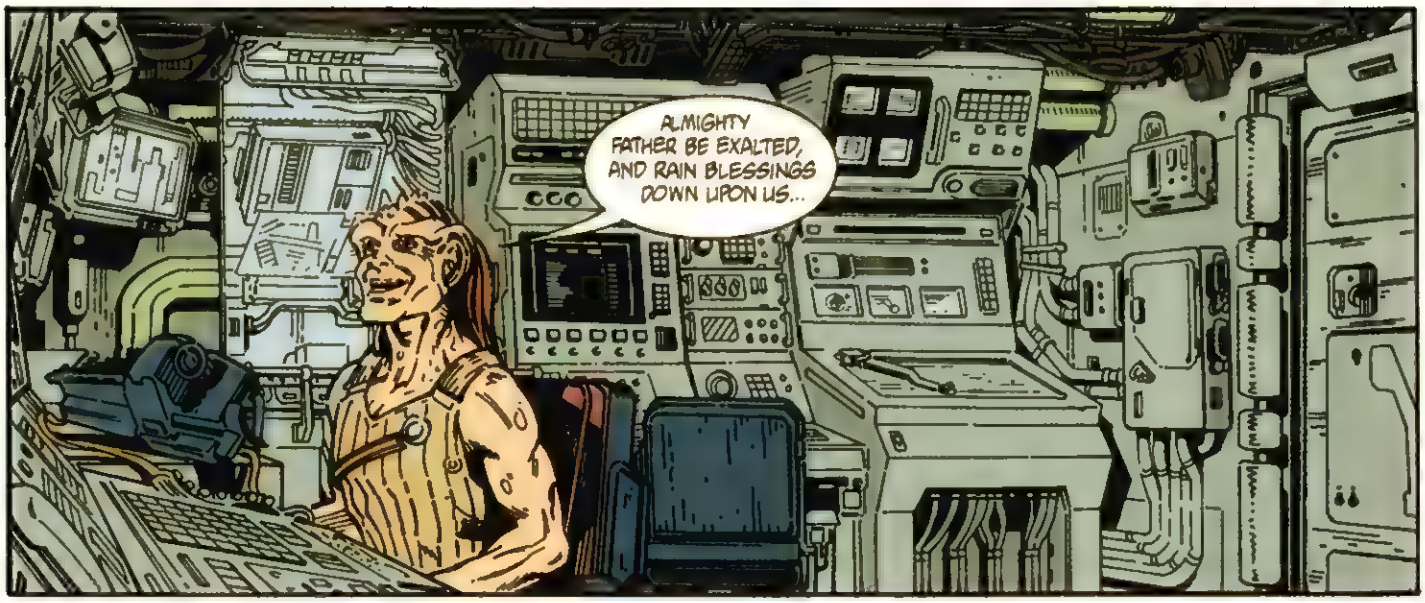

N-NO, SIR...

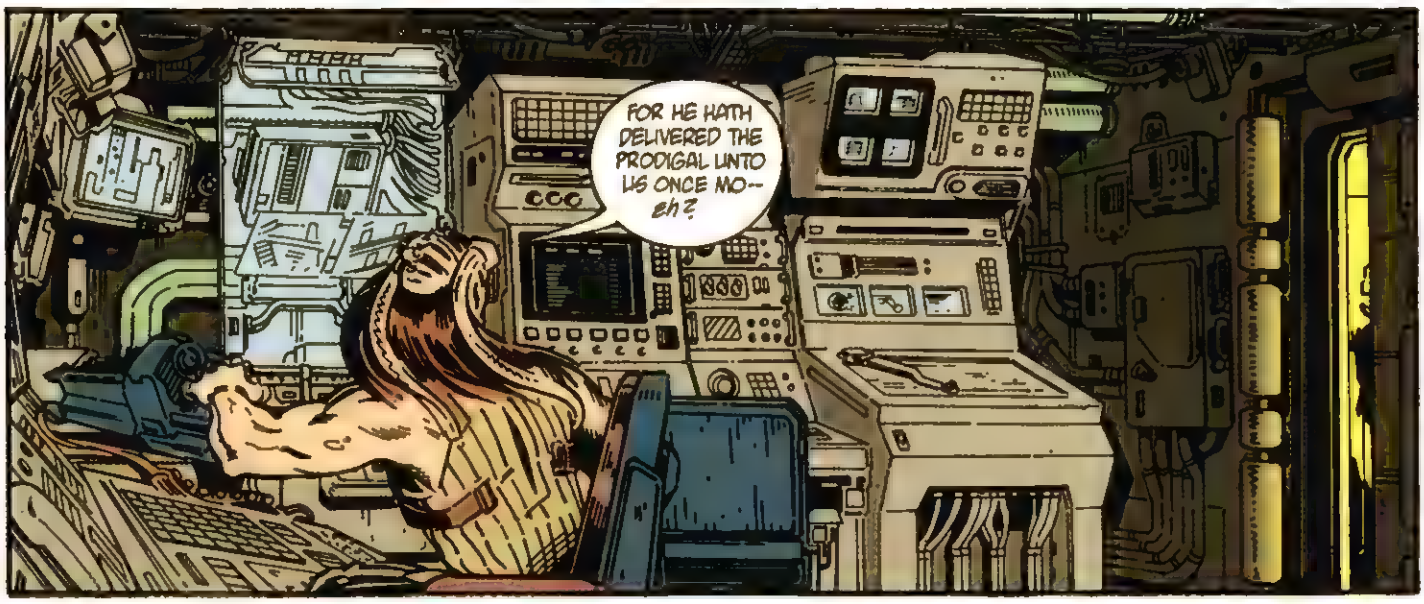

THEN HANG TIGHT. WE'RE ON OUR WAY BACK.

STILL NOTHING?
NOPE I--

HOLY...

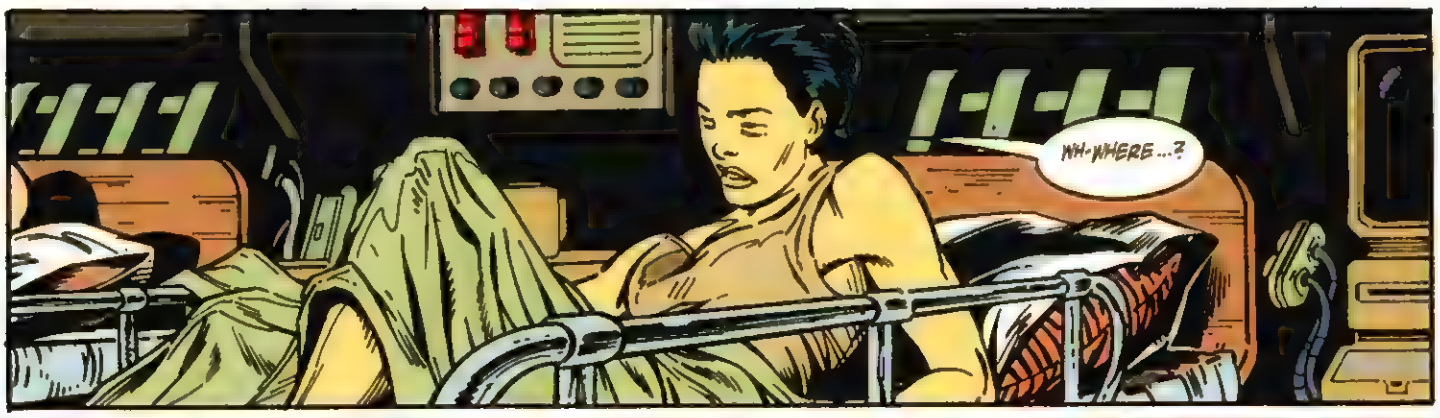
WHAT? WHAT?

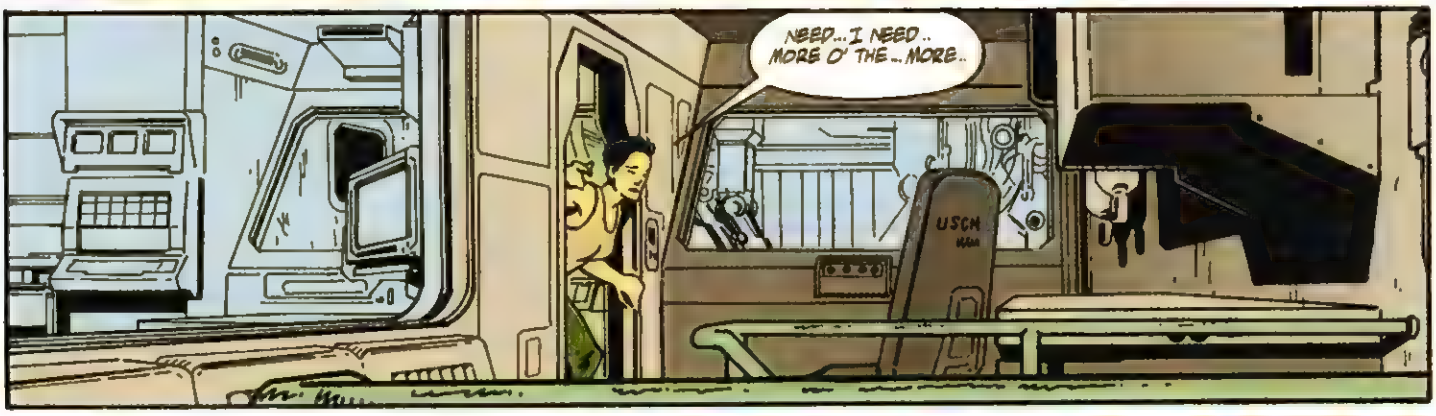

ALMIGHTY FATHER BE EXALTED, AND RAIN BLESSINGS DOWN UPON US...


FOR HE HATH DELIVERED THE PRODIGAL UNTO US ONCE MO-- eh?

SINNER!
AMEN.

NOW... WHAT THE HELL WERE YOU DOING IN HERE?


WH-WHERE...?


NEED...I NEED.. MORE O' THE...MORE..
USCM

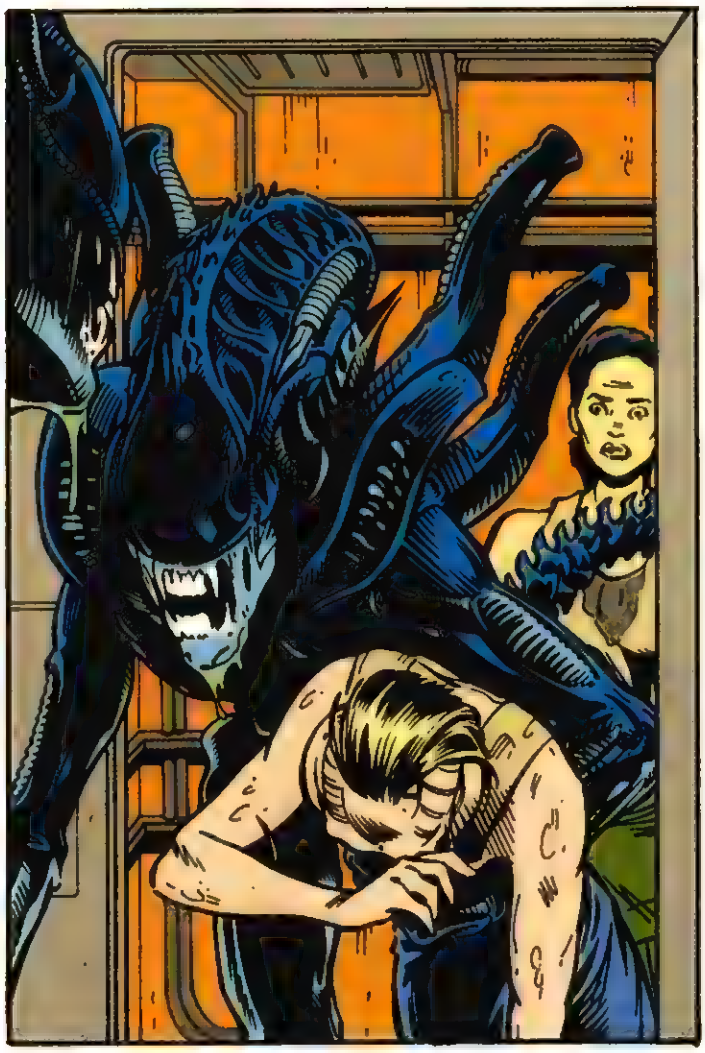
YOU... YOU GOTTA GIVE ME...

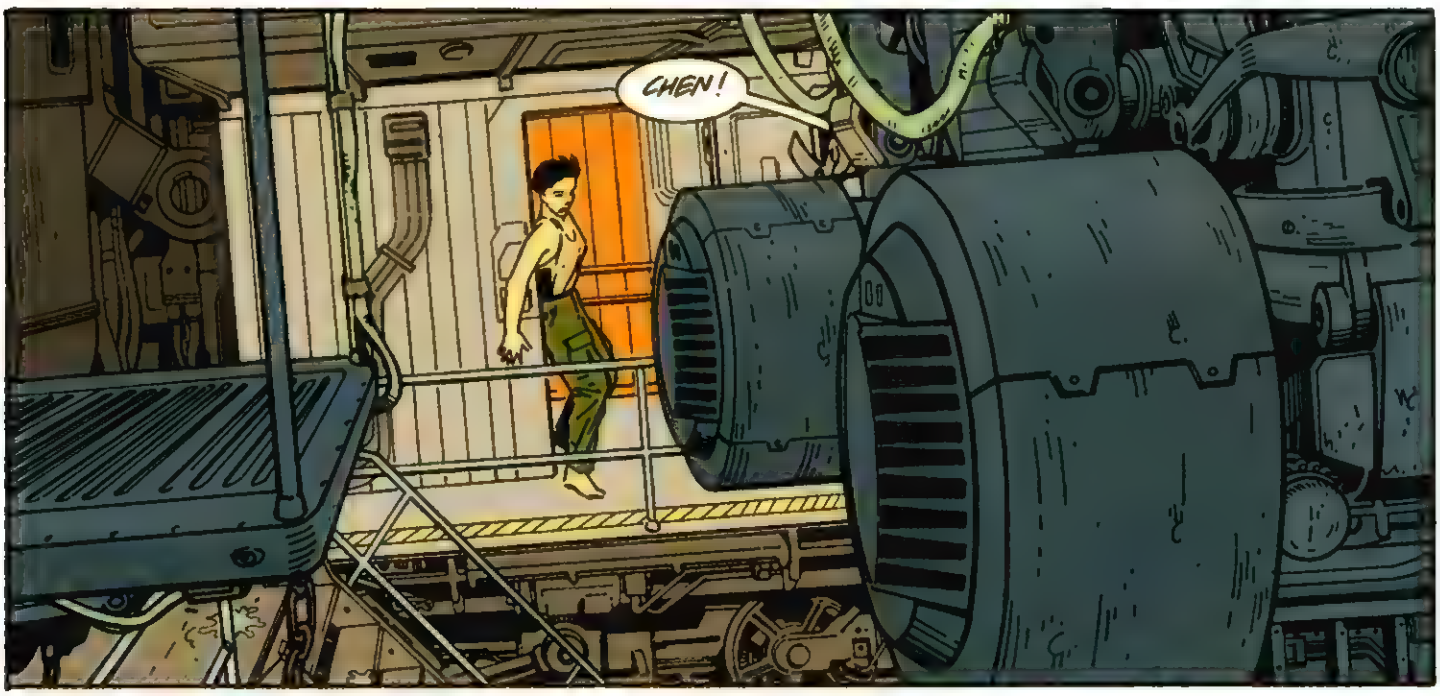
JELLY...

WHO... WHAT...?

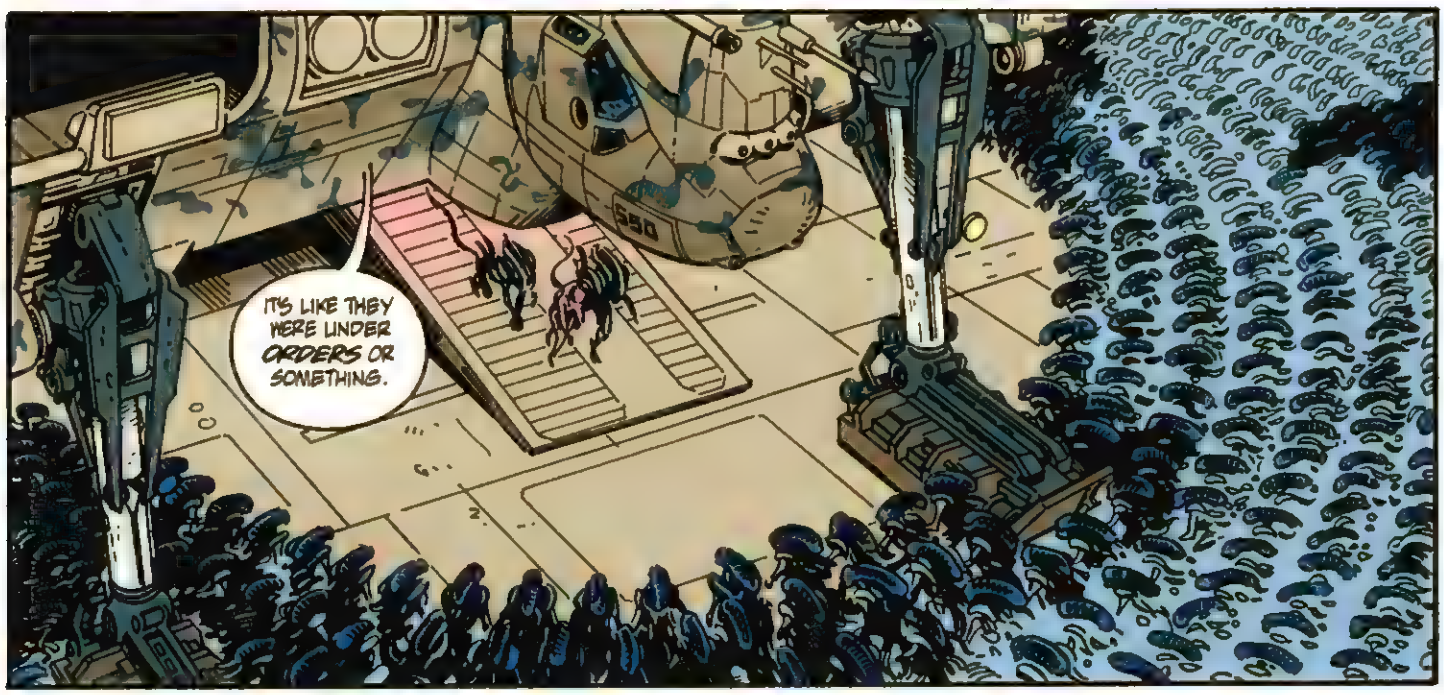
HSSSSS

SSSSSSS

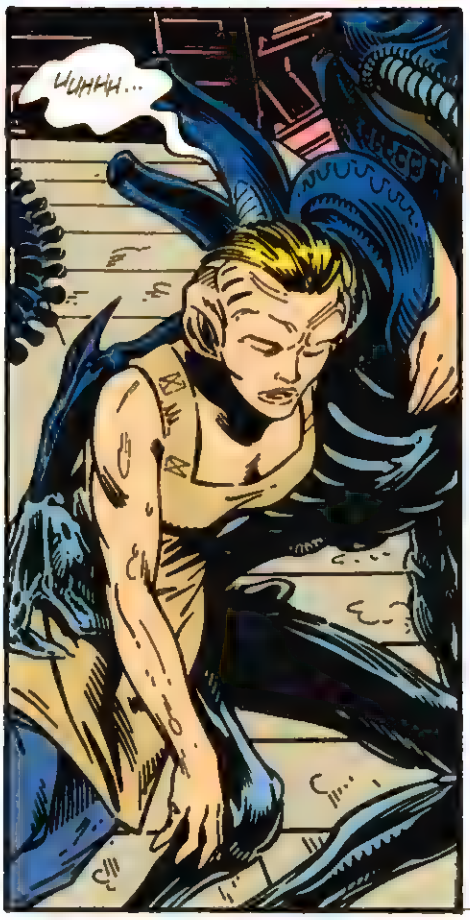



CHEN!

THE--THE BUG-MAN... WOMAN. THEY TOOK HER AND--AND LEFT.
HER?


IT'S LIKE THEY WERE UNDER ORDERS OR SOMETHING.

WHAT THE HELL DO WE DO NOW? THERE'S NO WAY WE CAN GET TO THE SHIP THROUGH THAT.

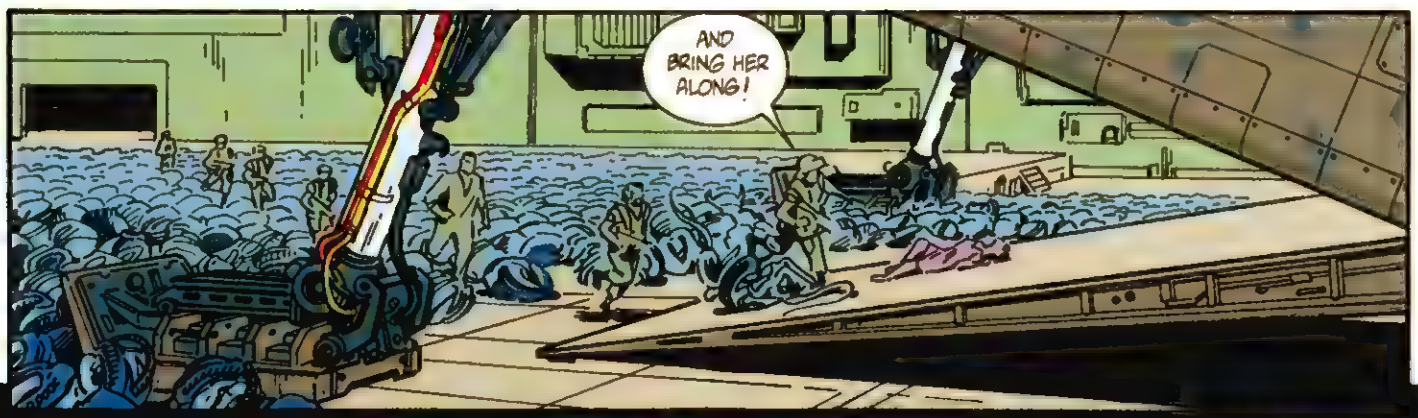

UHHH...

SS...SLEEP... SO TIRED...

NEED... TO SLEEP...

HRAAAAA...

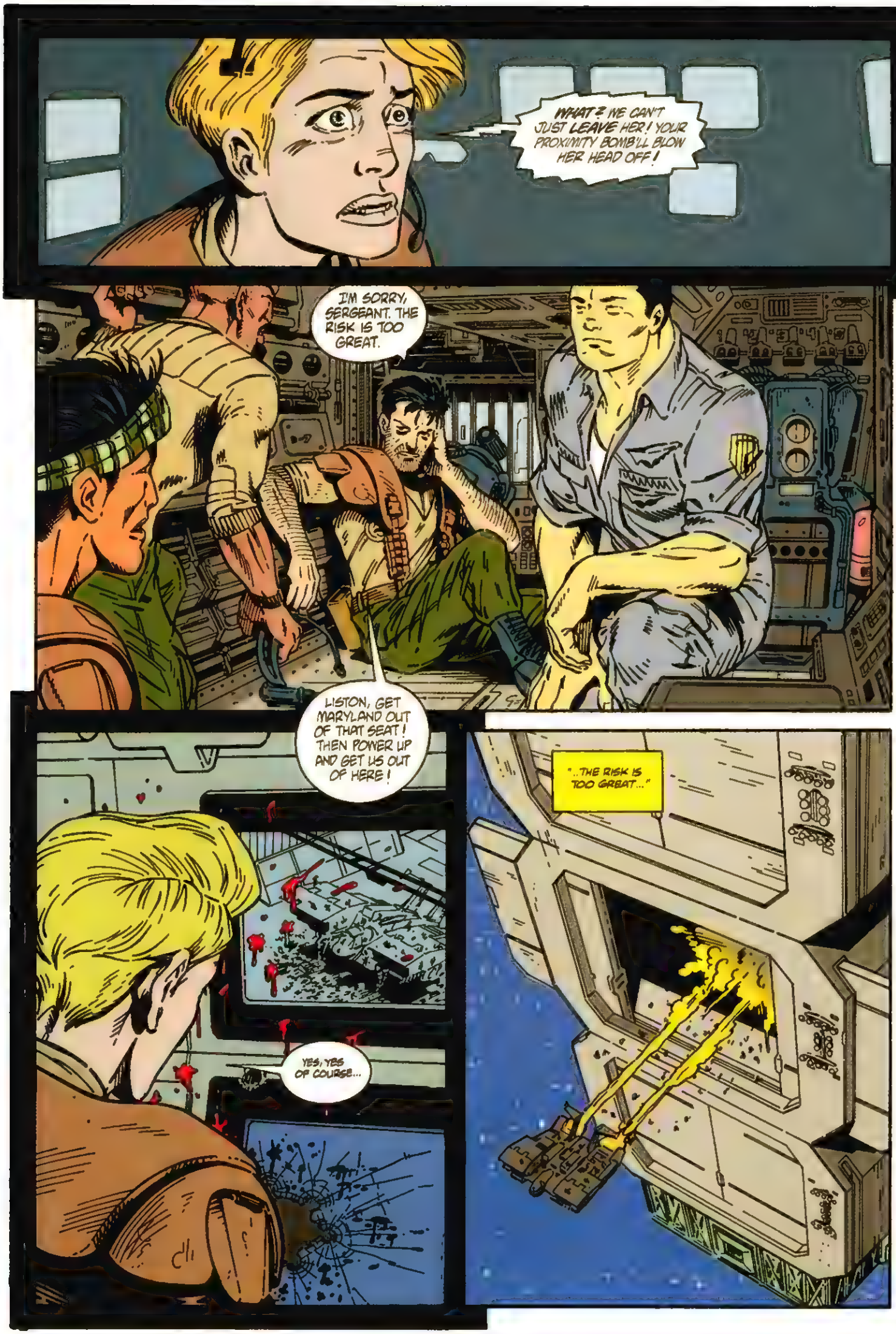
MADRE DE DIOS...
I DON'T KNOW WHAT THE HELL'S HAPPENING BUT WE'VE GOT TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF IT.
GET TO THE SHIP-- NOW!


AND BRING HER ALONG!

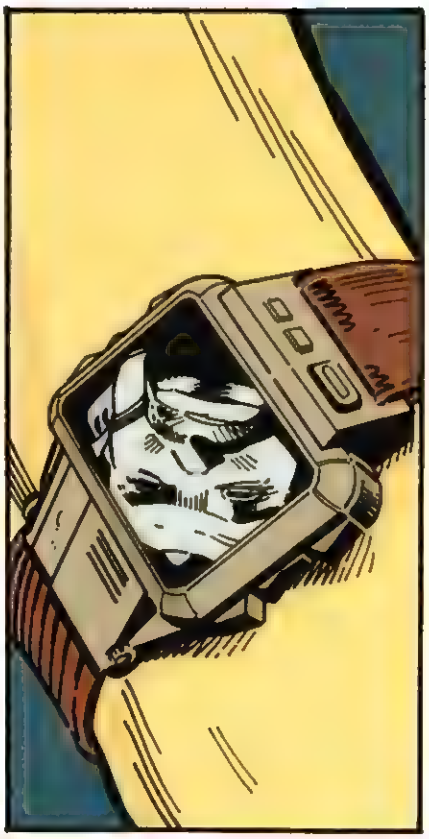
NO POWER AT ALL TO THE PRIMARIES?
NONE, SIR. AND I CAN'T FIGURE OUT WHAT'S CAUSING THE DRAIN.
LIEUTENANT, THIS IS NYLAND. I'M SECURE IN THE CONTROL ROOM, AND I THINK I CAN HAVE YOUR POWER BACK UP IN ABOUT... EIGHT SECONDS

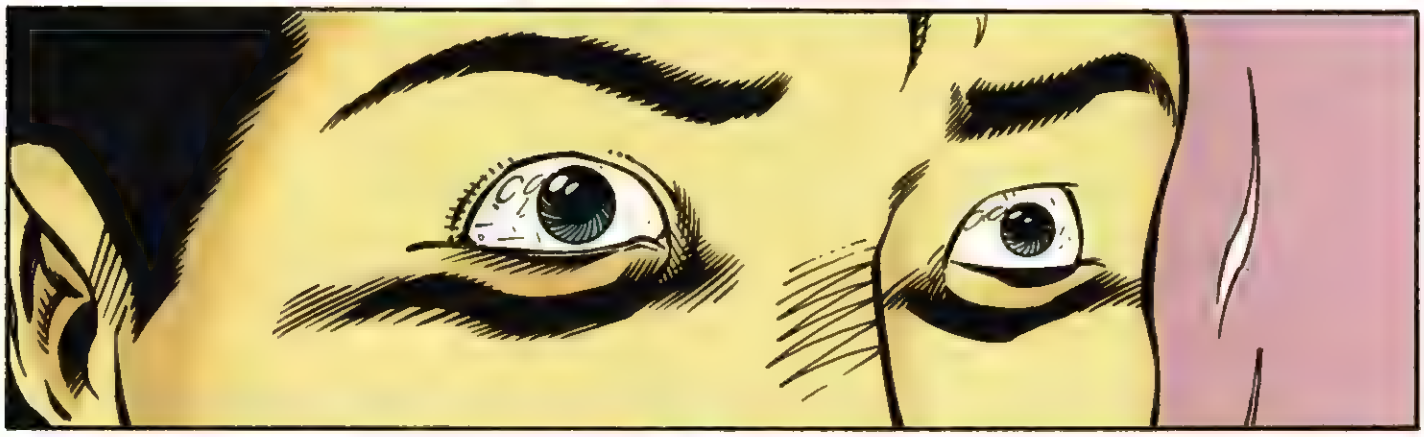
THEN GET THAT FRIGGING RAMP CLOSED!
SHE DID IT! FULL POWER RETURNING!

NYLAND! WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU DOING IN THERE?
WELL, SIR, AT THE MOMENT I'M RESTORING YOUR POWER, SO WE CAN GET OUR BUTTS OFF THIS PIECE OF JUNK.
SORRY I GOT SEPARATED, SIR. IT WAS UNINTENTIONAL.
I'LL JUST BET IT WAS UNIN--
LIEUTENANT!
THE XENOMORPHS ARE COMING OUT OF IT!
STAND CLEAR
MARYLAND--OPEN THE MAIN LOCK AND PREP THE ENGINES.
WE'RE LEAVING.

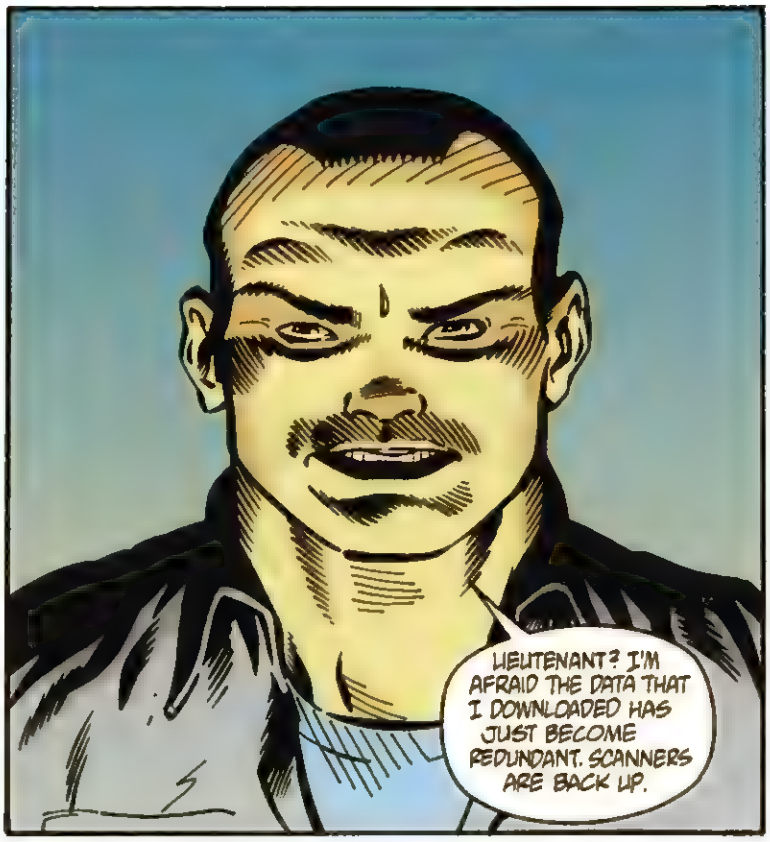

WHAT? WE CAN'T JUST LEAVE HER! YOUR PROXIMITY BOMB'LL BLOW HER HEAD OFF!
I'M SORRY, SERGEANT. THE RISK IS TOO GREAT.
LISTON, GET MARYLAND OUT OF THAT SEAT! THEN POWER UP AND GET US OUT OF HERE!
YES, YES OF COURSE...
"...THE RISK IS TOO GREAT..."

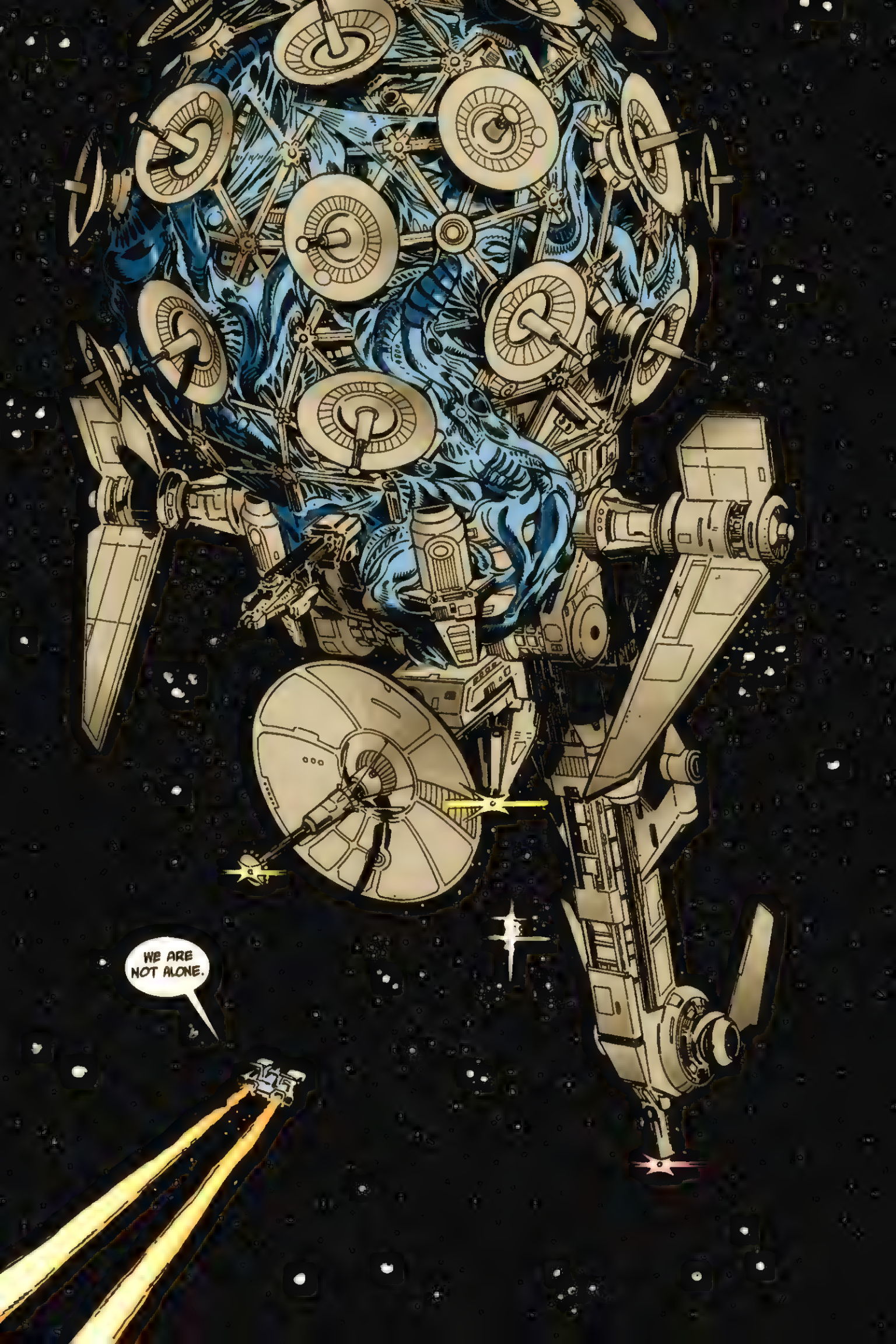
SAY GOODBYE TO MY SON FOR ME.
SPSHWUKK
WE'RE FREE OF THE STATION. POWER IS RESTORED, BUT THERE WILL BE A FORTY-SEVEN MINUTE DELAY WHILE SENSOR SYSTEMS REBOOT. UNTIL THEN WE'RE FUNCTIONALLY BLIND.
SERGEANT NYLAND'S LIFE SIGNS HAVE CEASED TRANSMITTING.
DGV SUB
RAKE





YOU CAN GLARE AT ME ALL YOU LIKE. IT WON'T MAKE ANY DIFFERENCE.


LIEUTENANT? I'M AFRAID THE DATA THAT I DOWNLOADED HAS JUST BECOME REDUNDANT. SCANNERS ARE BACK UP.

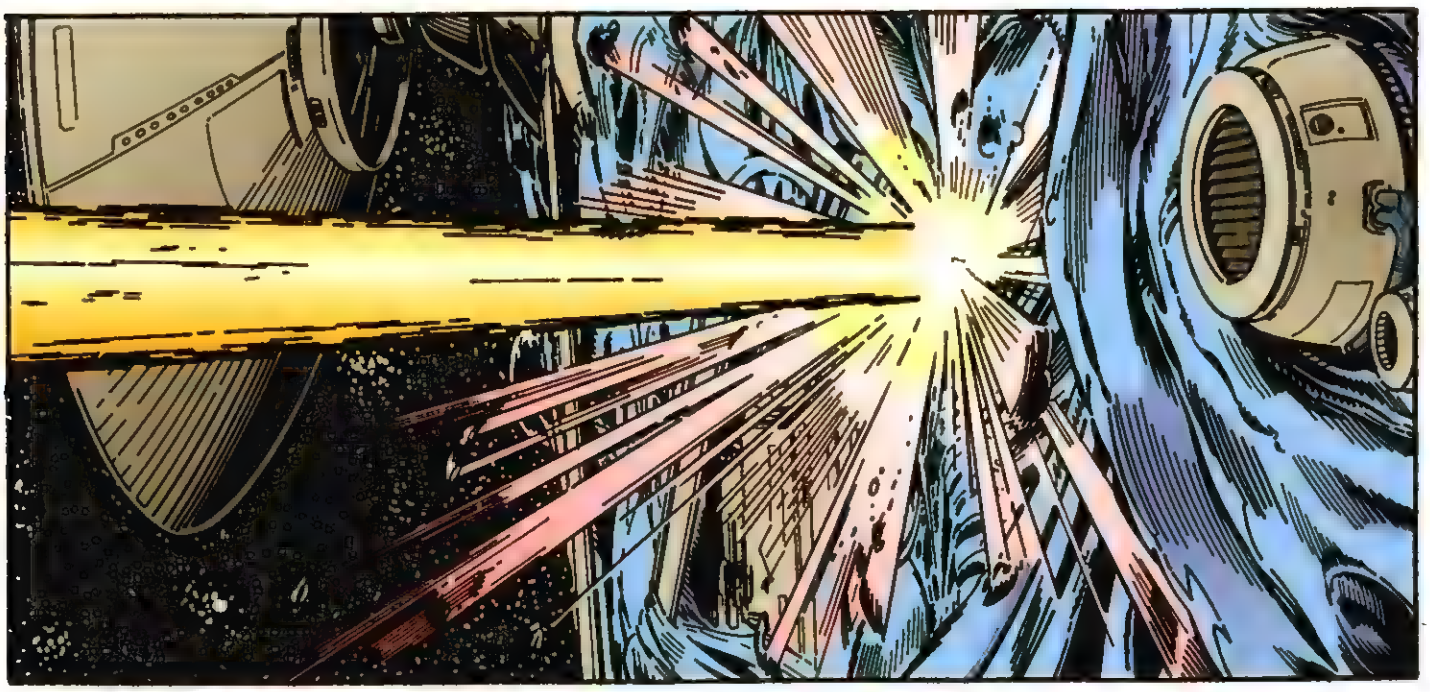

WE ARE NOT ALONE.

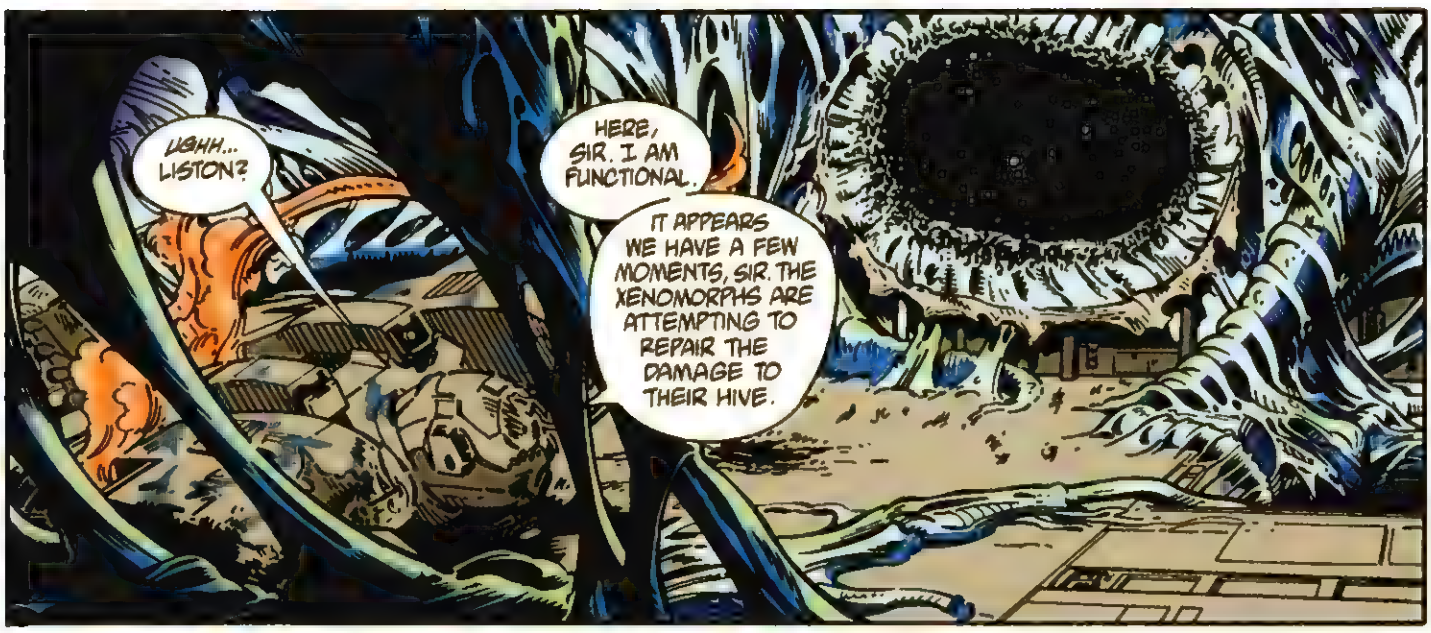
NEAR ALPHATECH RESEARCH STATION #2378. 01:27 HOURS.
WHAT THE HECK IS THAT?

THAT IS OUR TARGET, SIR.
THEY ARE NOT RESPONDING TO HAIL. HOWEVER...

...THEIR MAIN COMM LASER IS TRAINING ON OUR POSITION. FULL CHARGE IN...FOURTEEN SECONDS.
LOUSY BASTARD.

FIRE THRUSTERS.
THEN DO EXACTLY WHAT I TELL YOU.



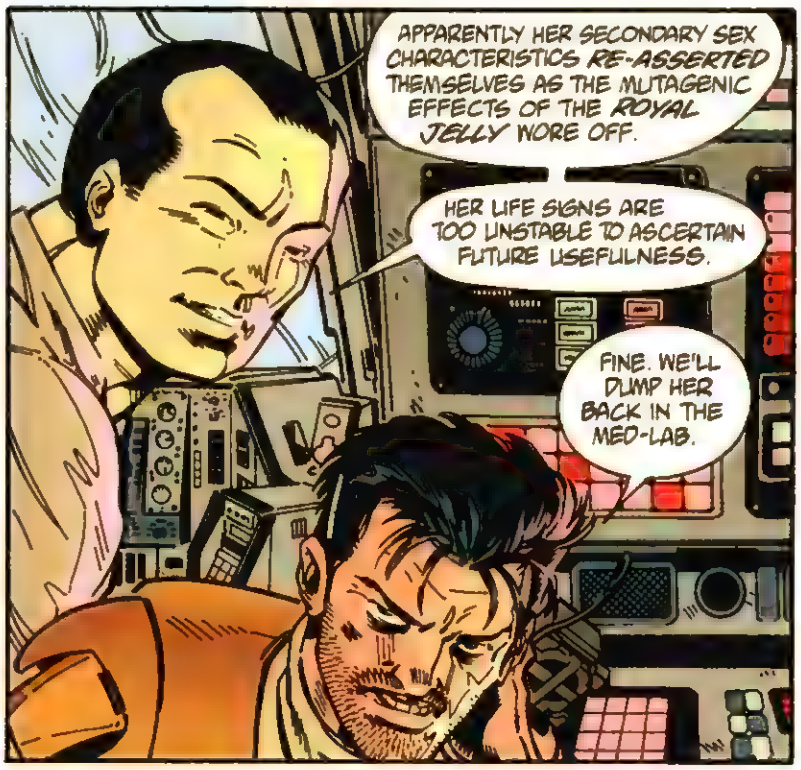

UGHH... LISTON?
HERE, SIR. I AM FUNCTIONAL.
IT APPEARS WE HAVE A FEW MOMENTS, SIR. THE XENOMORPHS ARE ATTEMPTING TO REPAIR THE DAMAGE TO THEIR HIVE.

NICE GOING, MAN. WHY THE HELL DID YOU DO THAT?
YOU DON'T ASK THE QUESTIONS HERE, PRIVATE. YOU JUST DO WHAT I DAMN WELL TELL YOU. UNDERSTOOD?
SYSTEMS REBOOT CONTINUING.

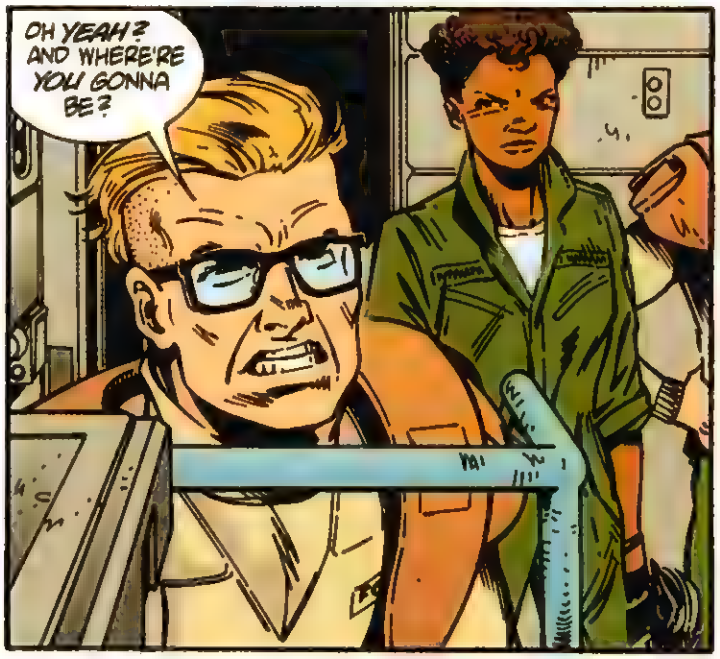
I UNDERSTAND YOU'VE JUST GOTTEN US IN PRETTY DEEP, SIR.
THAT'S RIGHT, AND IF YOU WANT TO GET OUT OF IT, YOU'LL LISTEN CLOSE. OTHERWISE, ALL YOU LOSERS WILL DIE RIGHT HERE.

ESTIMATED XENOMORPH ATTACK IN ... 480 SECONDS, SIR.

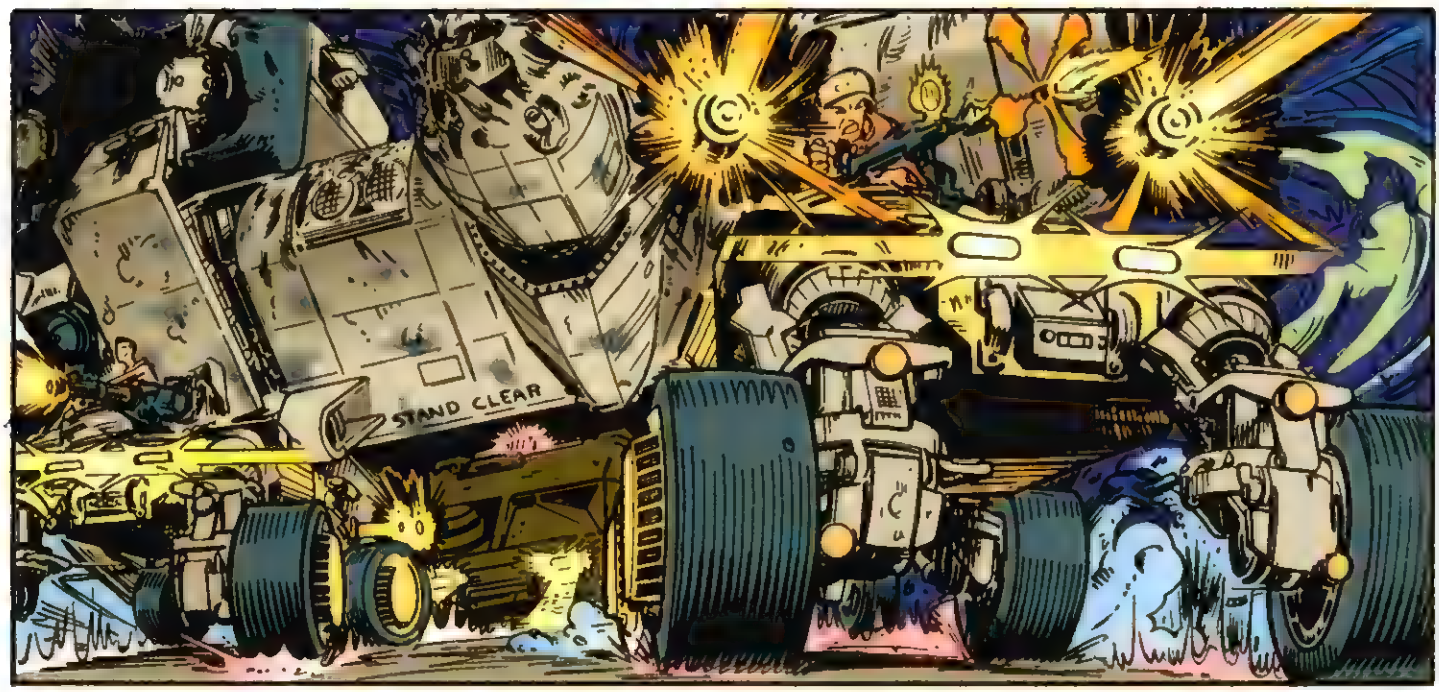
FIRST OFF, WHAT THE HELL HAPPENED TO IT... HER? WHAT WAS THAT COCOON STUFF BACK THERE, AND CAN SHE DO IT AGAIN?


APPARENTLY HER SECONDARY SEX CHARACTERISTICS RE-ASSERTED THEMSELVES AS THE MUTAGENIC EFFECTS OF THE ROYAL JELLY WORE OFF.
HER LIFE SIGNS ARE TOO UNSTABLE TO ASCERTAIN FUTURE USEFULNESS.
FINE. WE'LL DUMP HER BACK IN THE MED-LAB.

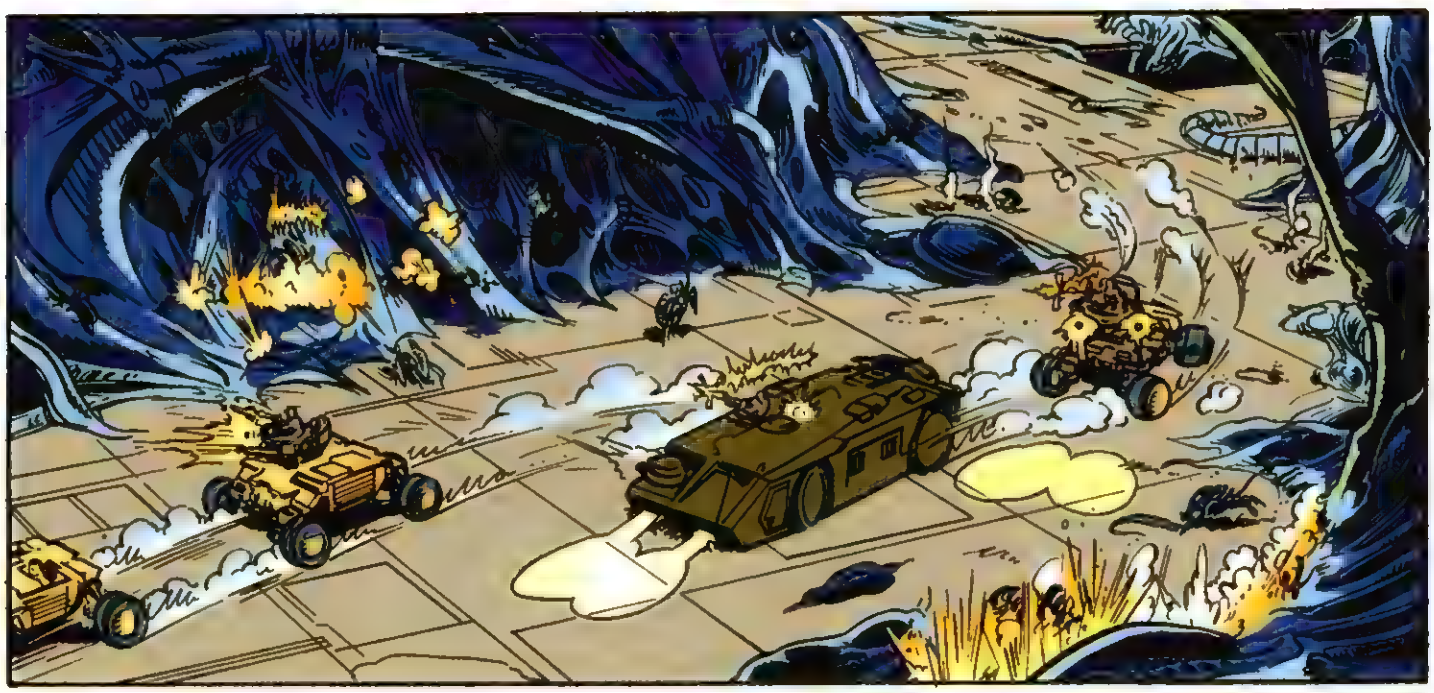
AS FOR THE REST OF YOU CLOWNS --YOU'RE GOING TO GET INTO THOSE FANCY APCs, LOCATE THE CORE OF THIS PIECE OF JUNK, AND DISABLE IT.

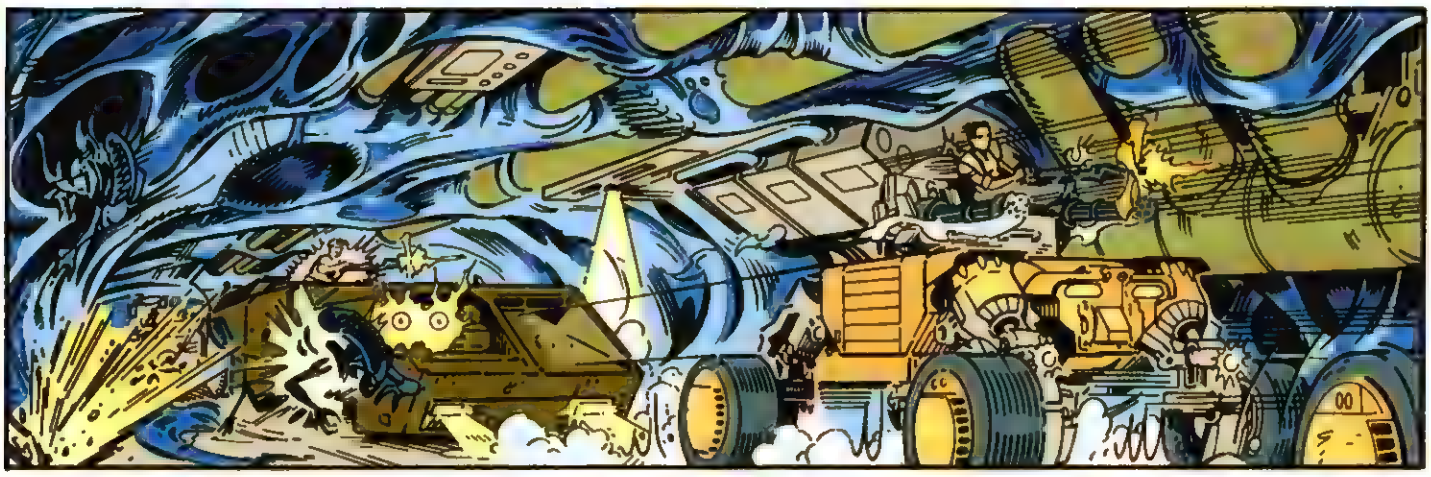

OH YEAH? AND WHERE'RE YOU GONNA BE?

I'LL BE RIGHT THERE WITH YOU.
WE'VE ALL GOT THE SAME DESTINATION.


STAND CLEAR

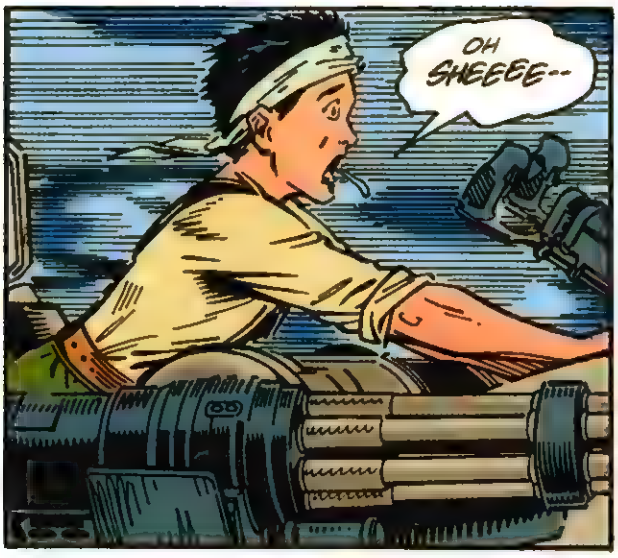
LISTON'S GOT THE SCHEMATICS OF THE ARRAY CODED INTO HIS MEMORY SO FOLLOW OUR LEAD.
...LET'S JUST HOPE THE BUGS HAVEN'T SCREWED THIS PLACE TOO FAR FROM MILITARY SPECS!

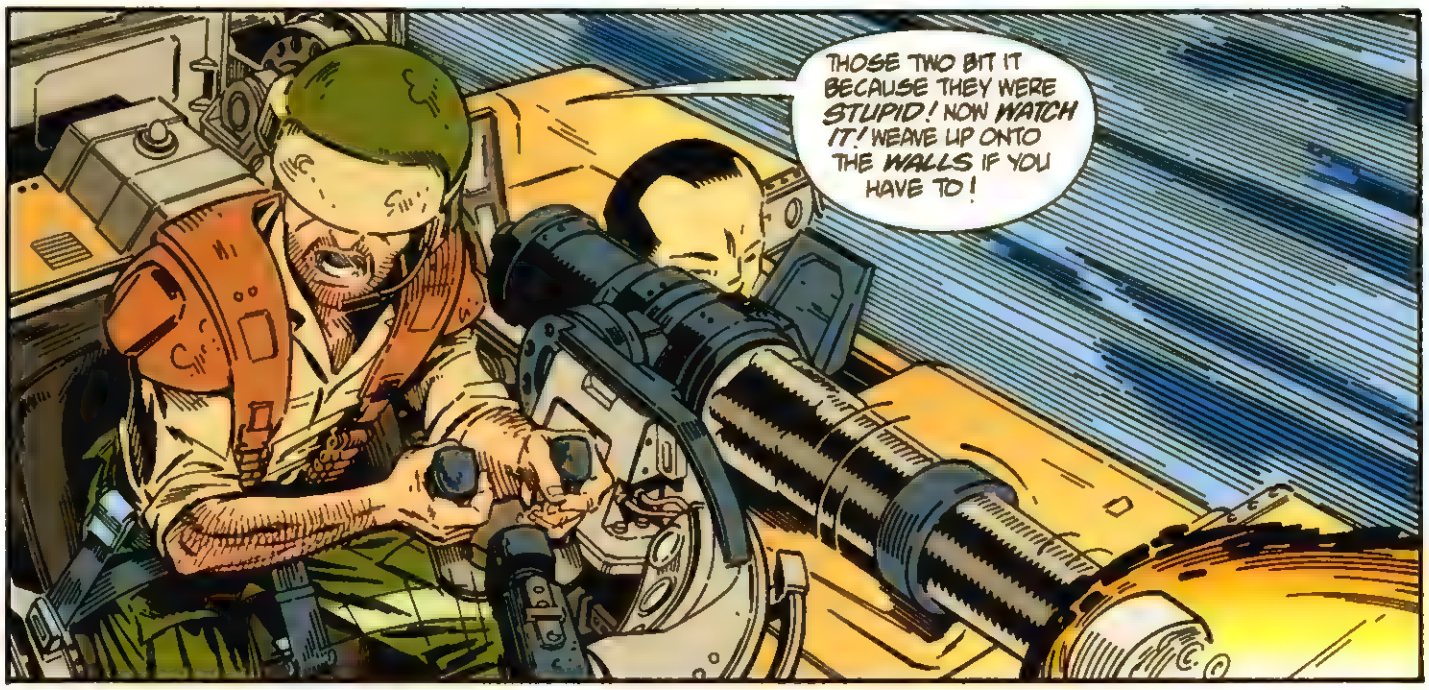


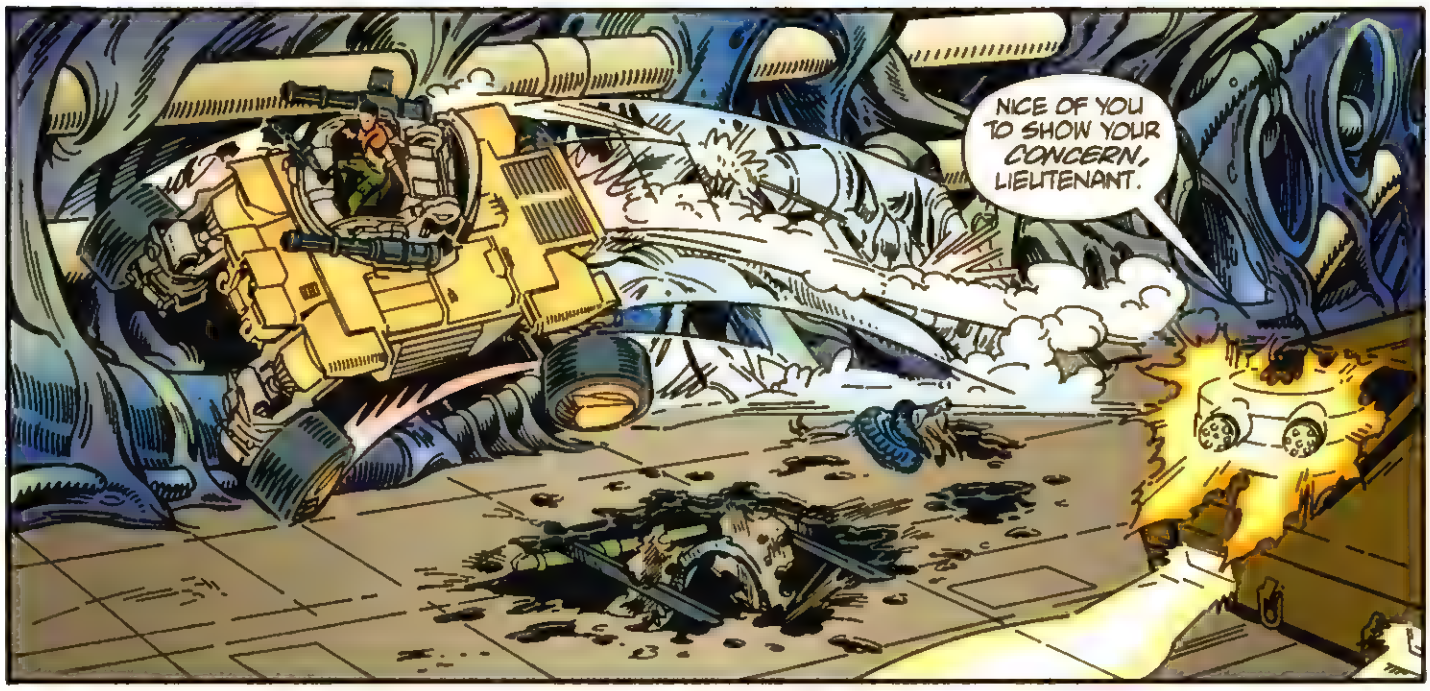


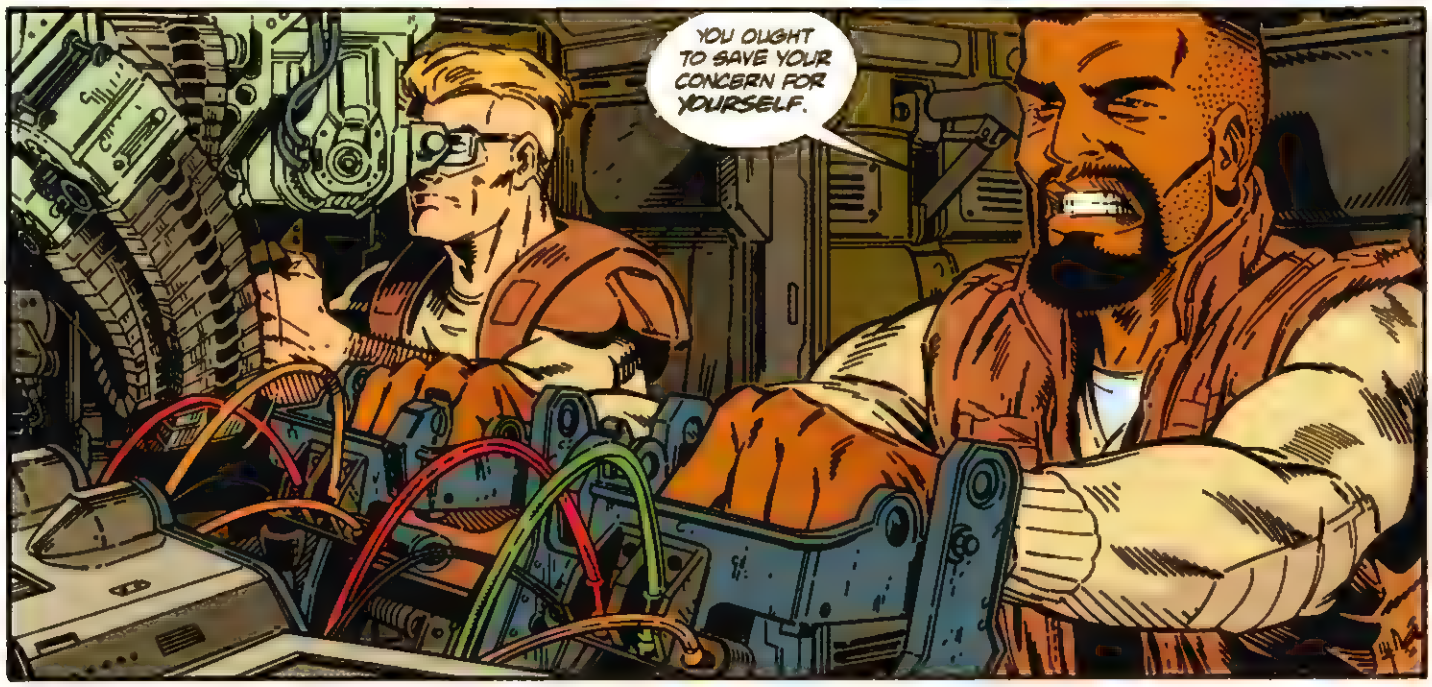
SSSSSSSSSSSS

VASQUEZ! WE'VE LOST BOSTON AND VASQUEZ!


OH SHEEEE--

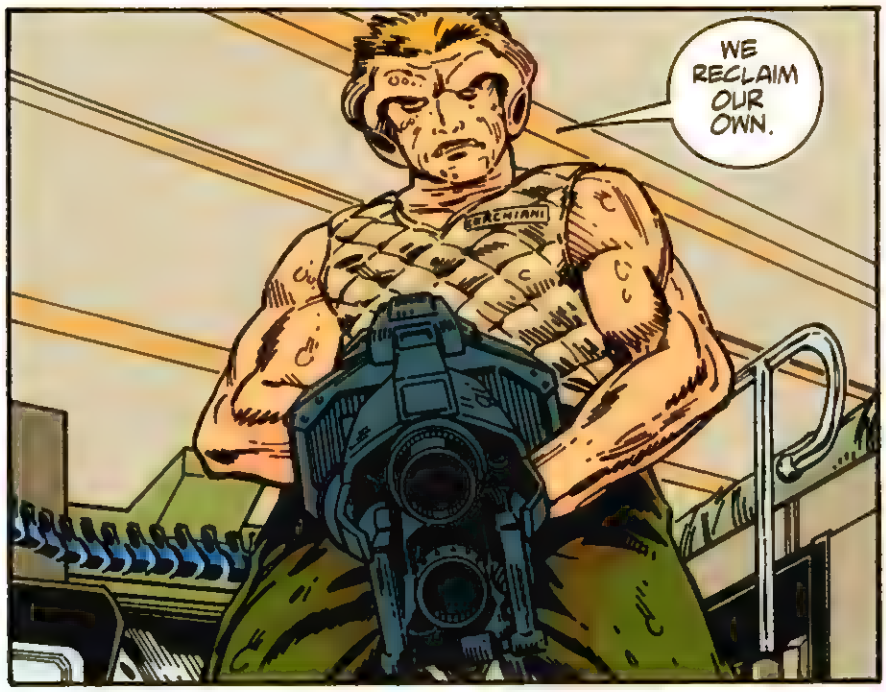

THOSE TWO BIT IT BECAUSE THEY WERE STUPID! NOW WATCH IT! WEAVE UP ONTO THE WALLS IF YOU HAVE TO!

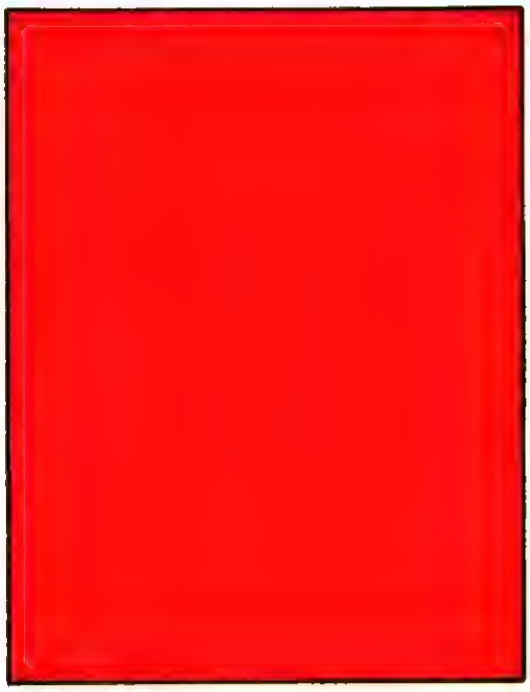

NICE OF YOU TO SHOW YOUR CONCERN, LIEUTENANT.


YOU OUGHT TO SAVE YOUR CONCERN FOR YOURSELF.

WRRR... UH, WUH.

ah


WE RECLAIM OUR OWN.



DAMN. DAAAMN!

AAAH! AA-AAAHH!

VA...VASQUEZ. ASK YOU... DO SOMETHING...FOR ME...
WANT... WANT YOU TO...GOT TO... GOT TO KILL ME.

QUÉ?
STOP...SCREWIN' AROUND...YOU CAN'T LET THOSE...BASTARDS ...GET TO ME. DON'T WANT TO...GO... LIKE THAT.

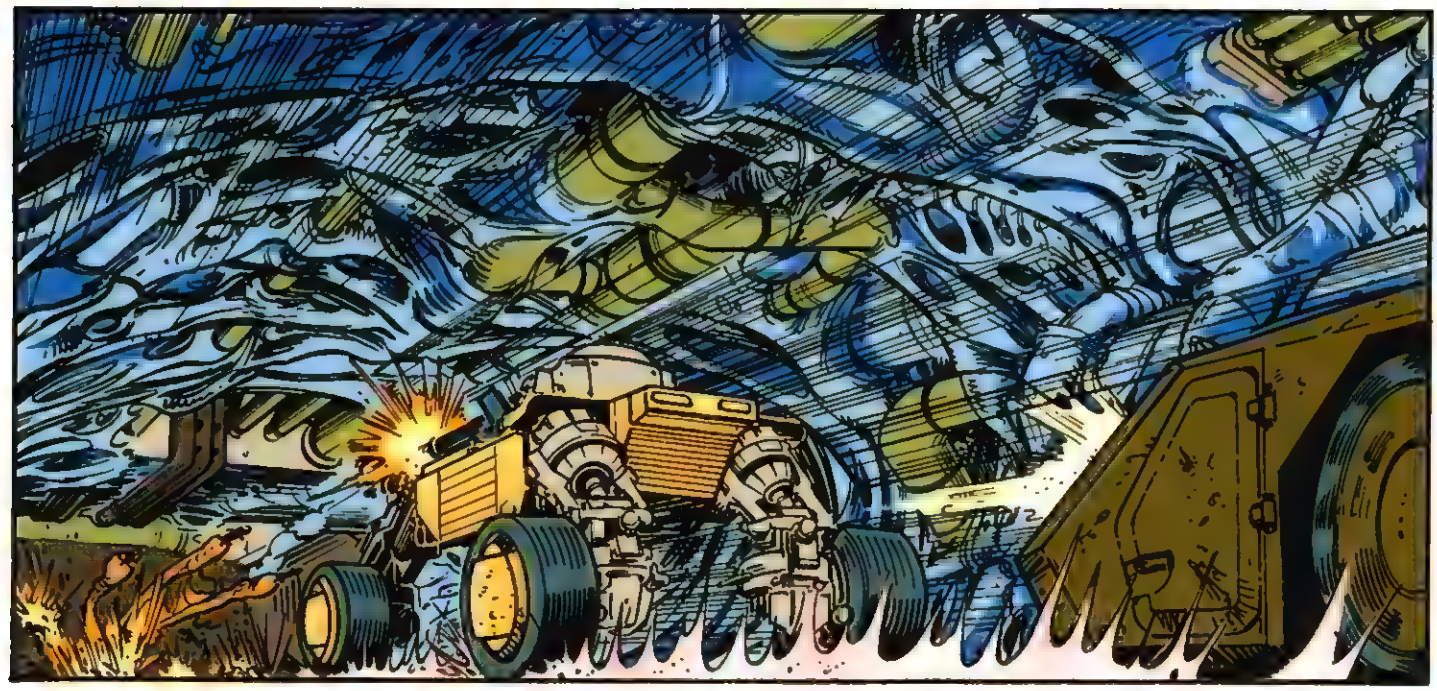
C'MON...HAK! DO IT.

HHHSSSSS!
NN-NNNN
NNNAAAAAAAAHHHHHH
SHLUCK
GRUNCH

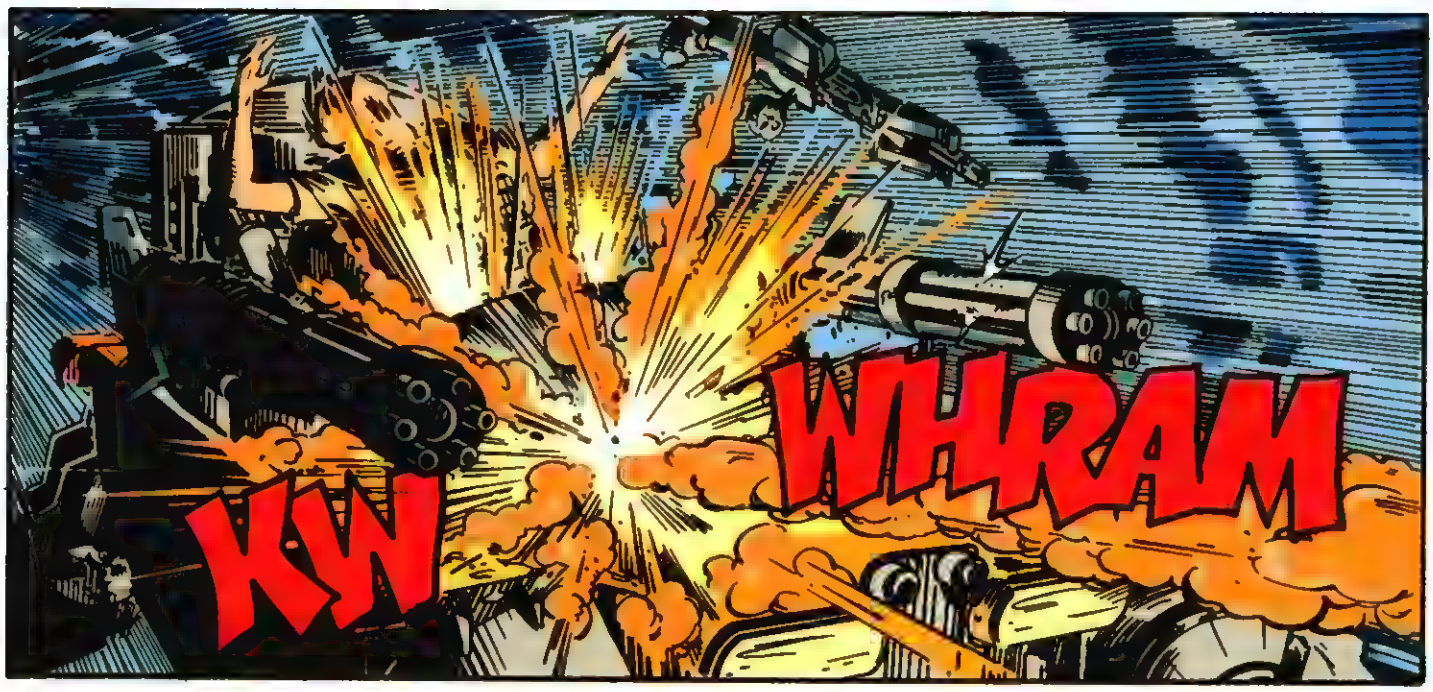
ALL RIGHT, THE BUGS HAVE THINNED OUT. IT OUGHT TO BE RIGHT AROUND THIS NEXT CURVE.

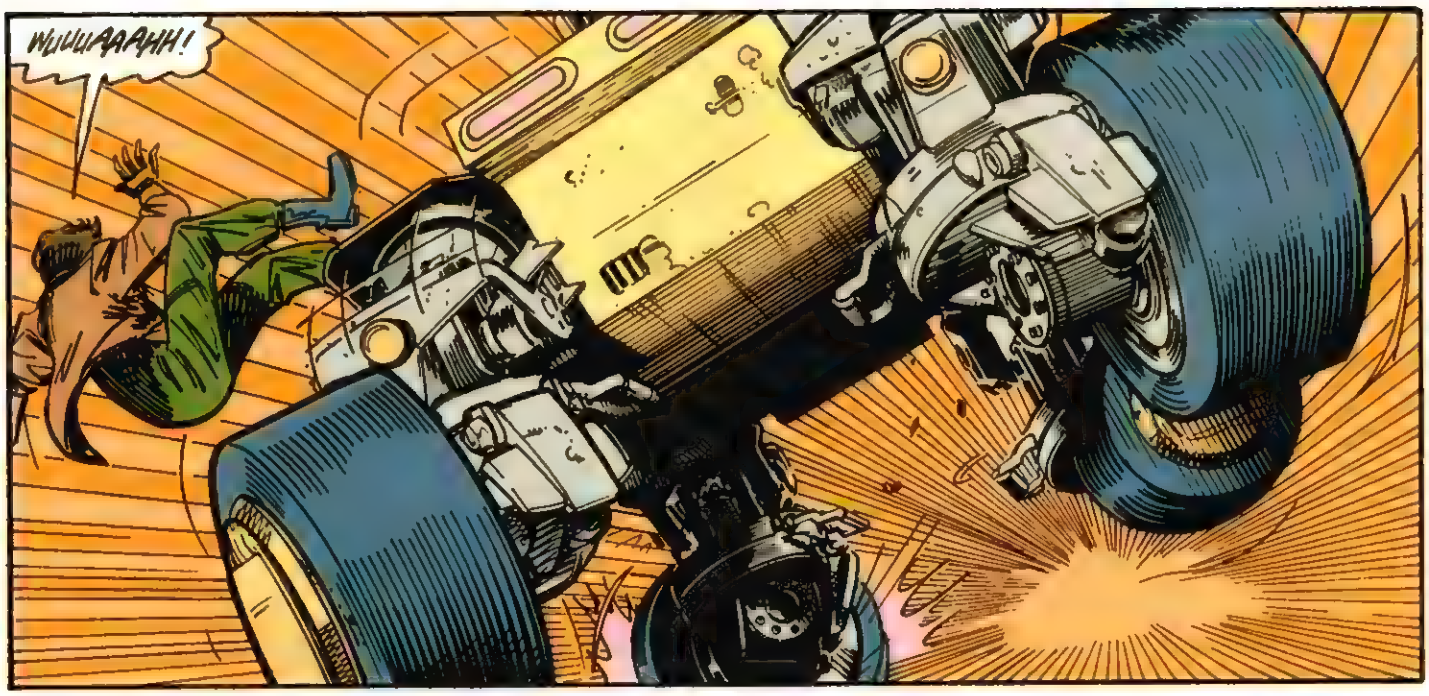
SKREEEK

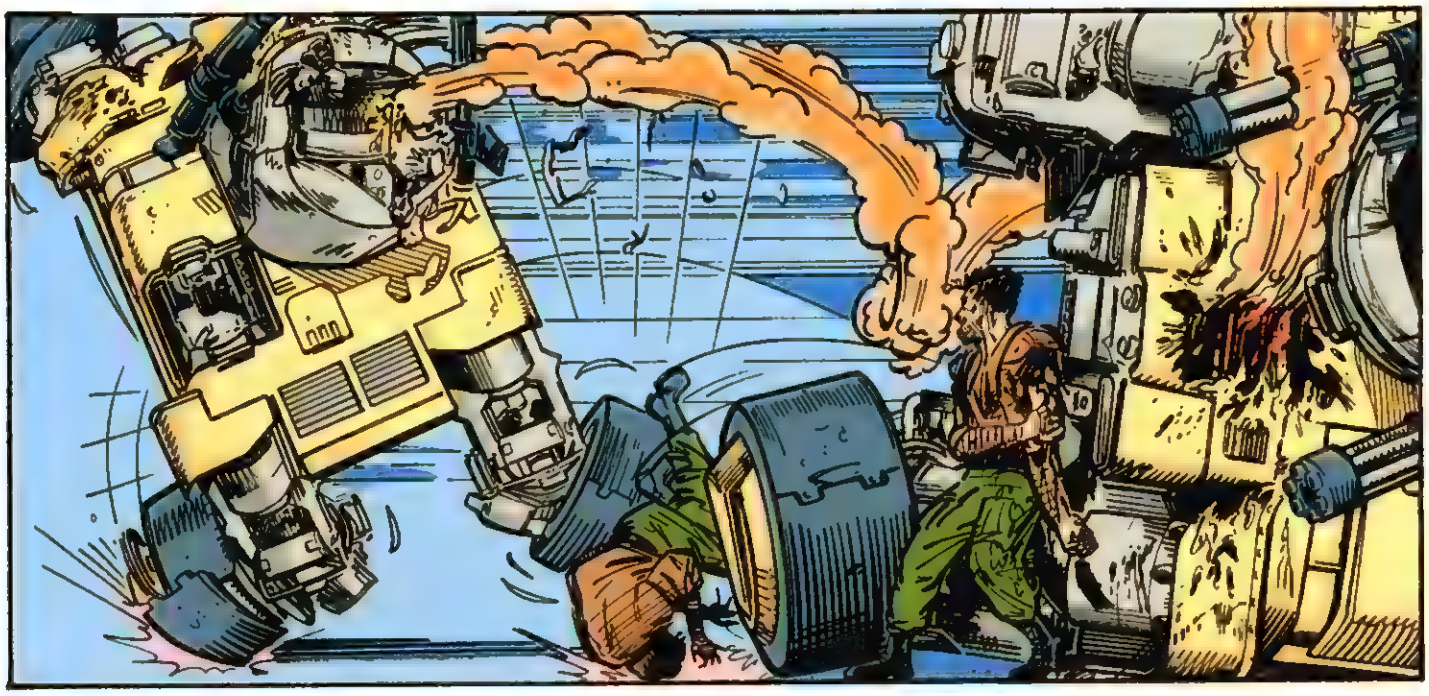
FIRE! FIRE! TAKE THEM OUT! NOW!

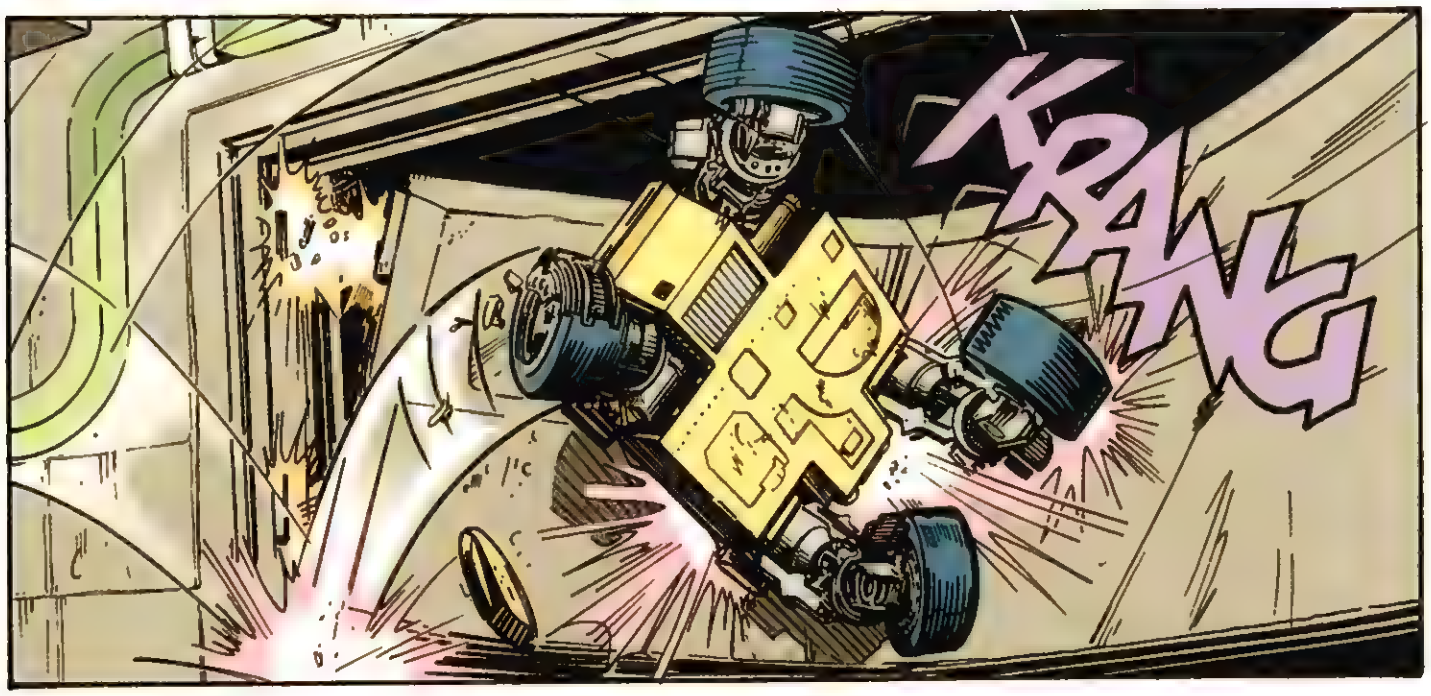


:UNNGHK!:
WHUMP
WHUMP


KW
WHRAM


NUUUAAAHH!




KRANG

I BELIEVE WE HAVE GAINED ACCESS, SIR.

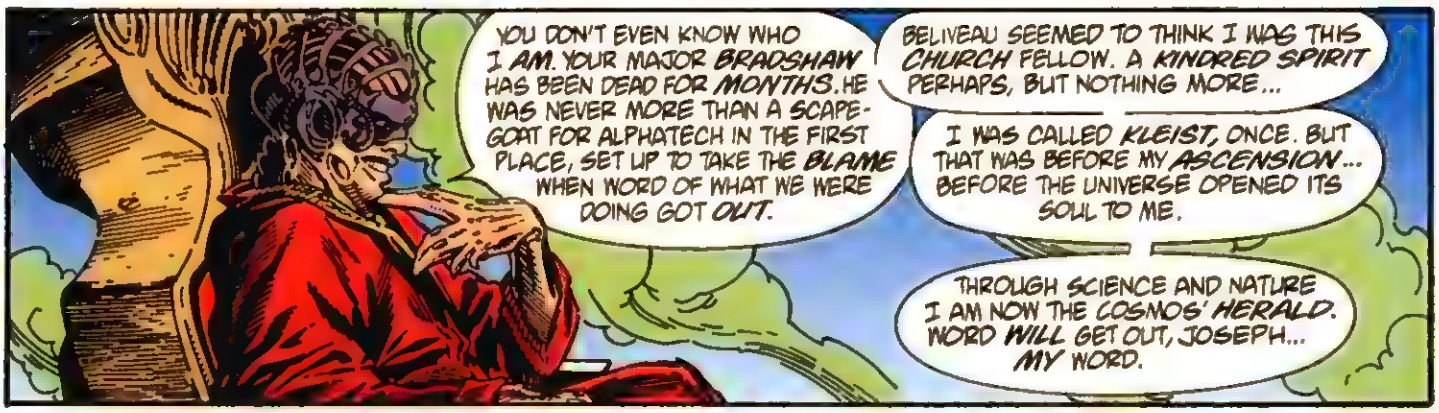
SO THIS IS WHERE IT ENDS.

I'M HERE, "FATHER."
YOU KNOW MY MISSION...DO YOU KNOW MY NAME?

OF COURSE, JOSEPH. OF ALL THE MEWLING, WHITE WORMS POISONING THE PERFECTION OF SPACE, YOU ARE THE MOST INTRIGUING.
ARE YOU HERE TO JOIN ME?

I'M HERE TO KILL YOU, BRADSHAW!
RIP YOUR VILE GUTS OUT AND STOMP THEM INTO--

OH MY, HOW FEARSOME. DO YOU REALLY THINK YOU WOULD HAVE GOTTEN THIS FAR IF I ACTUALLY FEARED YOU, YOU PSYCHOTIC WHELP?
WITH THIS COMMUNICATIONS ARRAY, I CONTROL EVERY TRANSMISSION IN AND OUT OF THE ENTIRE SECTOR. I HAVE MARRIED THIS REGION OF THE UNIVERSE...
AND WHAT GOD HATH WROUGHT, LET NO MAN PUT ASUNDER.
SHUT UP SHUT UP SHUT UP! JUST SHUT YOUR FRIGGIN' MOUTH!
HOW DOES IT FEEL AS YOUR MIND SLIPS AWAY FROM YOU, LIEUTENANT?
I HAVE READ YOUR PSYCH FILES, JOSEPH HENRY. I CAN SEE YOUR MIND AT WORK AS THOUGH IT WERE GEARS AND COGS ON A WORKBENCH. YOU ARE SO OBSESSED WITH DESTROYING YOUR FATHER THAT YOUR REASON IS INCAPACITATED.


YOU DON'T EVEN KNOW WHO I AM. YOUR MAJOR BRADSHAW HAS BEEN DEAD FOR MONTHS. HE WAS NEVER MORE THAN A SCAPEGOAT FOR ALPHATECH IN THE FIRST PLACE, SET UP TO TAKE THE BLAME WHEN WORD OF WHAT WE WERE DOING GOT OUT.
BELIVEAU SEEMED TO THINK I WAS THIS CHURCH FELLOW. A KINDRED SPIRIT PERHAPS, BUT NOTHING MORE...
I WAS CALLED KLEIST, ONCE. BUT THAT WAS BEFORE MY ASCENSION... BEFORE THE UNIVERSE OPENED ITS SOUL TO ME.
THROUGH SCIENCE AND NATURE I AM NOW THE COSMOS' HERALD. WORD WILL GET OUT, JOSEPH... MY WORD.

NOTHING YOU CAN DO WILL STOP ME, POOR CHILD. WHY BEAT YOUR TINY FISTS AGAINST THE INEVITABLE?
JOIN ME, MY SON. IT IS FUTILITY TO DO OTHERWISE.

NO! I HATE YOU, FATHER!

HATE YOU! KILL YOU! KILL YOU! KILL!
CHAT CHAT

SIR! STOP IT! YOU DON'T KNOW THE RAMIFICATIONS...
I DID IT, MOMMA...I KILLED HIM...

I DON'T LIKE THIS...
YEAH. THAT ALARM... SOUNDS LIKE A SELF-DESTRUCT.

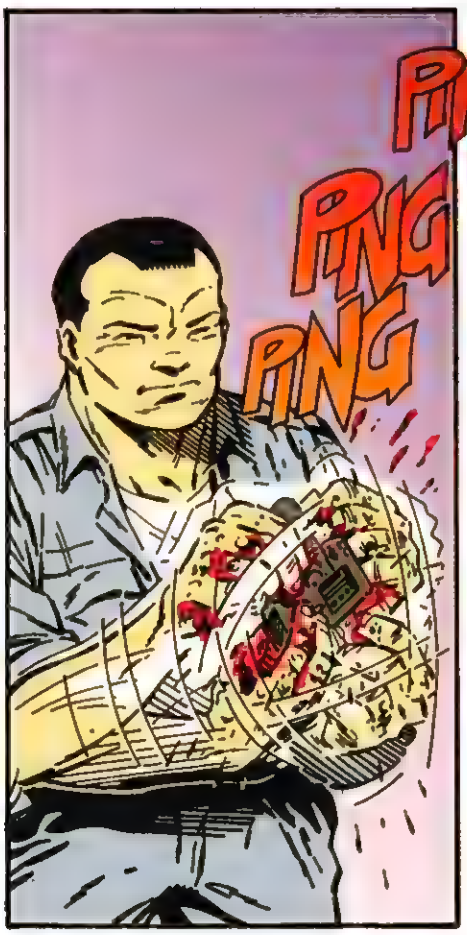
LISTON...LISTON, I'VE LOST TOO MUCH BLOOD. I...GOD, LISTON, YOU'VE GOT TO GET THEM BACK ALIVE...GET THEM BACK TO THE SHIP. WHATEVER IT TAKES, YOU'VE GOT TO GET THEM BACK TO THE SHIP...

IS THAT AN ORDER, SIR? I AM TO TAKE THE MARINES BACK ALIVE? AT ANY COST?

YES, YES, LISTON. IT'S AN ORDER.

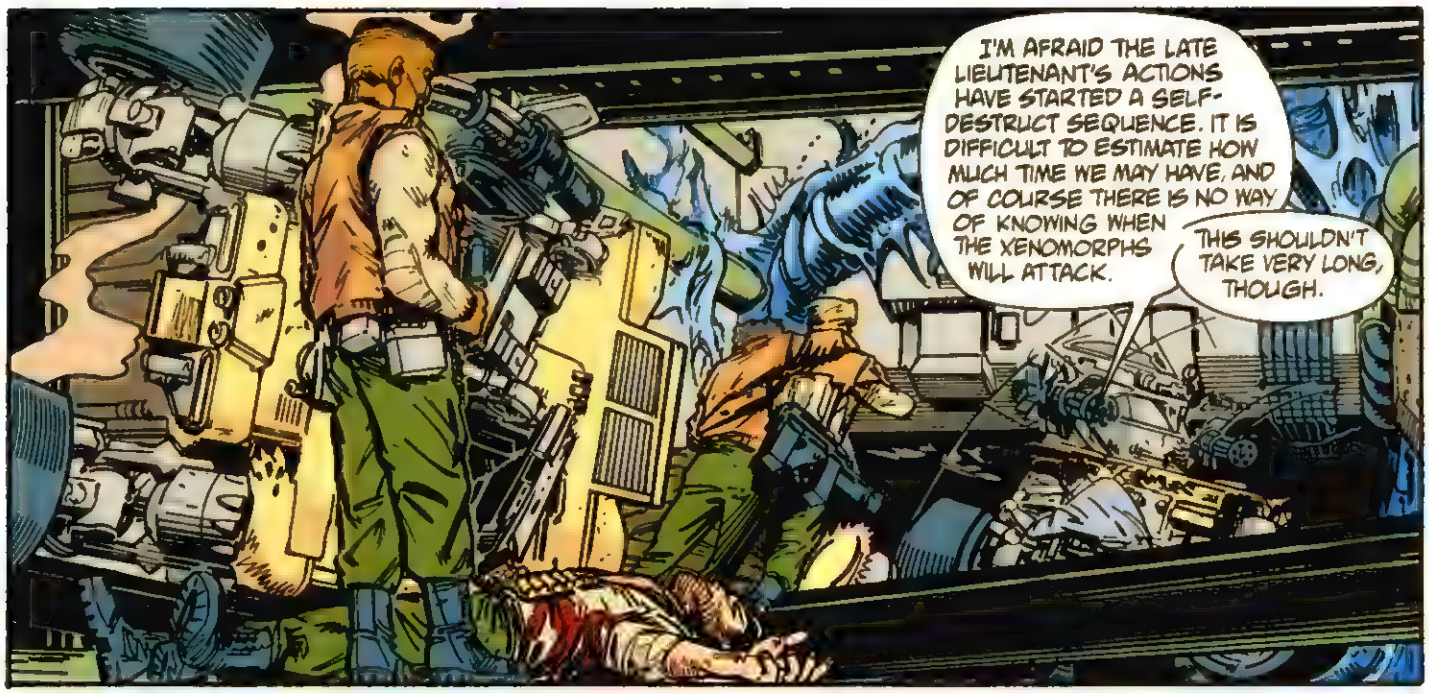
SHUNK!

IS THAT THE CONTROL FOR THE BOMBS IN OUR NECKS?
YEAH. I THINK HE CAN DEACTIVATE IT.
HE'S GOT AN EIGHT-SECOND DELAY.


PING PING-
PING
PING

BREEP
THERE.

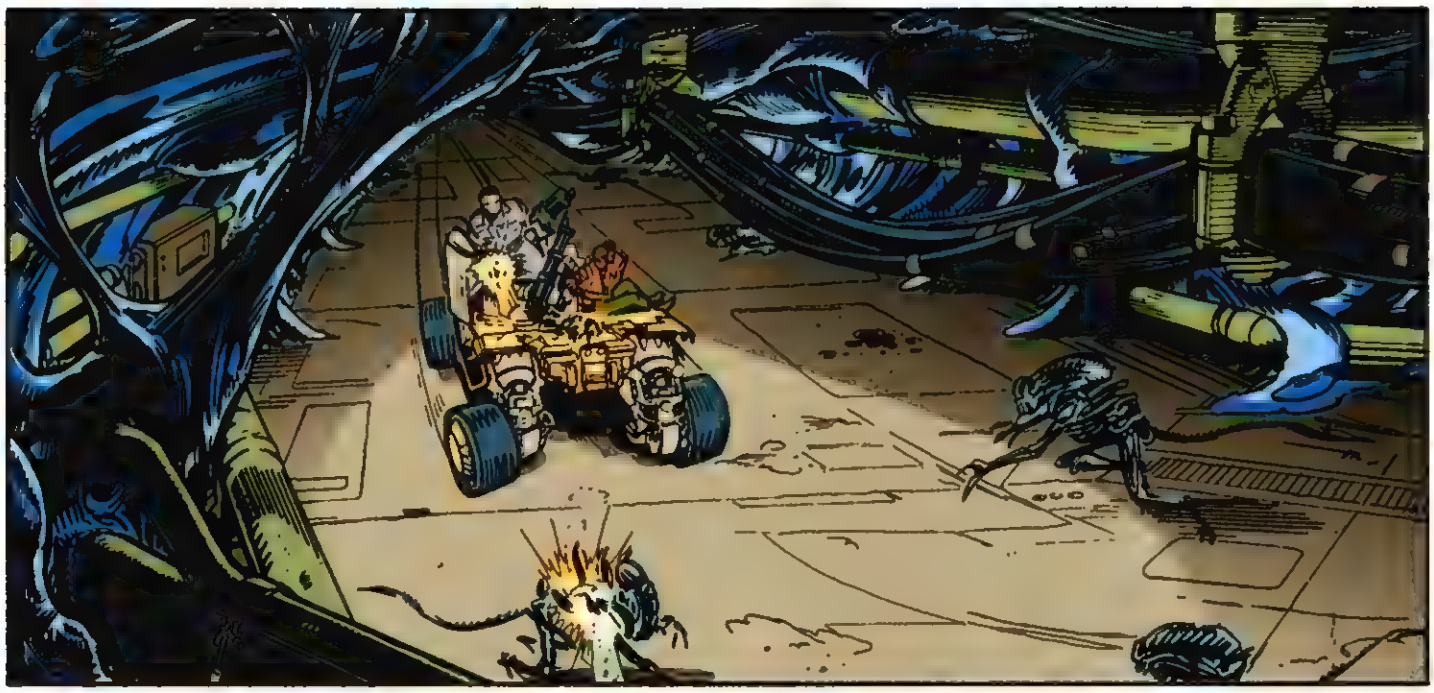
I APOLOGIZE FOR THE DELAY. IT WAS DIFFICULT TO SEE THROUGH THE BLOOD.
LET'S GET THIS VEHICLE FUNCTIONAL.


I'M AFRAID THE LATE LIEUTENANT'S ACTIONS HAVE STARTED A SELF-DESTRUCT SEQUENCE. IT IS DIFFICULT TO ESTIMATE HOW MUCH TIME WE MAY HAVE, AND OF COURSE THERE IS NO WAY OF KNOWING WHEN THE XENOMORPHS WILL ATTACK.
THIS SHOULDN'T TAKE VERY LONG, THOUGH.

HOW--*HOW* COULD HE HAVE DONE THAT? YOU KNOW SOMETHING, DON'T YOU? WHAT THE HELL JUST HAPPENED?

WELL...LISTON'S TECHNOLOGY IS *WAY* OVER MY HEAD, BUT WHEN I WAS REPROGRAMMING HIM FOR HENRY, I WAS ABLE TO INSTALL AN ASIMOV SUBROUTINE, TRIGGERED BY REMOTE LATER.
AND I TOOK OUR LIEUTENANT'S NAME OFF THE "PROTECT" LIST.

THIS ONE WILL FUNCTION. LET'S GET YOU BACK TO THE SHIP.



GIVE THIS THING ALL YOU CAN, MAN.
I'M GIVING IT MORE THAN THAT

BUT I DON'T REALLY THINK IT'S GOING TO MAKE MUCH DIFFERENCE

I KNOW...

SYSTEMS HAVE REBOOTED! THE SHIP IS CLEAR FOR ENGINE POWER-UP!

C'MON, LISTON! MOVE!

I'LL HOLD THEM OFF OUT HERE UNTIL YOU CAN GET THE SHIP POWERED UP!

THRUMM

LISTON UNIT--
FINAL REPORT.

IDENTIFICATION POSITIVE--
"FATHER" WAS ONE PROFESSOR ERNST KLEIST.

STRATEGIC POSITION KLEIST HELD IS NOW NULLIFIED--LOSS OF LIFE WITHIN ACCEPTABLE PARAMETERS. FULL CHARGES WILL BE LEVIED AGAINST ALPHA-TECH UPON RETRIEVAL OF THIS UNIT.
DETAILED REPORT RECORDED AND FILED.

INITIATE SHUT DOWN PROCEDURES.
OBJECTIVE ACCOMPLISHED.
END.

ALIENS™

Mankind has fought for survival over countless millennia, but nothing has threatened humanity's existence like the murderous Alien scourge. While some have tried to use the creatures' deadly abilities to serve their own selfish ends, no one can dance with the devil, and ultimately only one species must prevail. To that end, men have turned their own lethal instincts and cold intellect against the monsters, creating engineered plagues, cybernetic fighting suits, and even bogus android aliens; however survival rides not on technology, but on the primacy of the most deeprooted, feral instincts.

Dark Horse Comics' critically acclaimed *Aliens* series set the bar for how the universe of a popular film could be expanded through graphic fiction. The *Aliens Omnibus* collection presents these exciting series in value-priced, quality-format volumes, featuring the work of Mark Verheiden, Mike Mignola, Chris Claremont, John Arcudi, Doug Mahnke and more!

Aliens Omnibus Volume 1
ISBN 978-1-59307-727-3

Aliens Omnibus Volume 2
ISBN 978-1-59307-828-7

Aliens Omnibus Volume 3
ISBN 978-1-59307-872-0

Aliens Omnibus Volume 4
ISBN 978-1-59307-926-0

Aliens Omnibus Volume 5
ISBN 978-1-59307-991-8

Aliens Omnibus Volume 6
ISBN 978-1-59582-214-7

Aliens vs. Predator Omnibus Volume 1
ISBN 978-1-59307-735-8

Aliens vs. Predator Omnibus Volume 2
ISBN 978-1-59307-829-4

$24.99 each!

DARK HORSE BOOKS
darkhorse.com

AVAILABLE AT YOUR LOCAL COMICS SHOP OR BOOKSTORE!
To find a comics shop in your area, call 1-888-266-4226.
For more information or to order direct: • On the web: darkhorse.com • E-mail: mailorder@darkhorse.com • Phone: 1-800-862-0052 Mon.–Fri. 9 AM to 5 PM Pacific Time

Aliens vs. Predator Omnibus © 2010 Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation. Aliens™ & © 1986, 2010 Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation. Predator™ & © 1987, 2010 Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation. All rights reserved. TM indicates a trademark of Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation. (BL 5047)

ALIENS™

NOVELS FROM DARK HORSE BOOKS®

ALIENS: ORIGINAL SIN
By Michael Jan Friedman
Ripley and Call face the deadliest aliens yet . . .
ISBN 978-1-59582-015-0

ALIENS: DNA WAR
By Diane Carey
On a hostile world, nowhere is safe . . .
ISBN 978-1-59582-032-7

ALIENS: CAULDRON
By Diane Carey
Adrift in space, terror is born again.
ISBN 978-1-59582-113-3

ALIENS: STEEL EGG
By John Shirley
The first of the battles unfolds . . .
ISBN 978-1-59582-114-0

ALIENS: CRIMINAL ENTERPRISE
By S. D. Perry
Danger lurks around every corner at an elaborate drug manufacturing operation guard-dogged by the savage Aliens . . .
ISBN 978-1-59582-003-7

ALIENS: NO EXIT
By B. K. Evenson
Knowledge is the greatest danger of all . . .
ISBN 978-1-59582-004-4

$6.99 each!

AVAILABLE AT YOUR LOCAL COMICS SHOP OR BOOKSTORE. TO FIND A COMICS SHOP IN YOUR AREA, CALL 1.888.266.4226
For more information or to order direct: •On the web: darkhorse.com •Phone: 1.800.862.0052 Mon.–Fri. 9 AM to 5 PM Pacific Time.

Aliens™ & © 1986, 2006, 2007, 2009 Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation. All rights reserved. ™ indicates a trademark of Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation. Dark Horse Books® and the Dark Horse logo are registered trademarks of Dark Horse Comics, Inc. (BL5102)

DARK HORSE BOOKS
darkhorse.com